

Tornado Outbreak Hero Jackie Kerby Feels Humbled

Humbling is the word home health nurse Jackie Kerby uses to describe her experiences on the catastrophic day of April 27, 2011. On that date, she was among the people whose effort and determination helped a young man survive traumatic injuries after a tornado ripped apart his life.

Devastating is the word many others use to describe their experiences that terrible day. For Justin Adams of the Mount Hope community in Lawrence County, the damage was exceptionally severe. An EF5 tornado took his 21-year-old brother's life and almost claimed his.

Following the tornado outbreak, the near total lack of communication was frightening. Jackie lives four miles from the main path of the tornadoes. After the warnings ceased, she and her husband Mikan were very concerned about the well-being of their five adult children, four of whom lived in the path of the tornadoes. All forms of telephone communication were out, so they set out in his truck in the rain to make sure none of the family needed assistance. Jackie was especially concerned because when the tornado hit Phil Campbell, her cell phone conversation with her daughter was cut off suddenly just as the tornado hit.

En route to check on their children, a group of three men on the side of the road flagged the couple down to help their severely injured friend whom they had rescued from a swampy area. The men had heard his shouts, wrapped him in a roll of clear plastic, lifted him to a truck tailgate and waited for emergency help.

The traffic was heavy, but the Kerbys pulled off the roadway. Initially Jackie thought the victim was dead because he was so pale from his blood loss. She told her husband they had to get the severely injured and shivering man to the hospital or he wouldn't live. So they loaded him into the back seat of their truck and set off for Russellville.

Jackie said the young stranger in their truck kept passing out, and a nasty break in the main artery in his leg continued gushing. She prayed without ceasing and leaned over his body to help control the blood loss. She was shaking all the way.



Jackie Kerby's skills and experience on April 27, 2011, helped save a young man's life. She is shown with a home health patient.

"I kept saying 'you're not going to die on me' and I went on my gut reaction," Jackie said. As her husband drove to the Russellville Hospital emergency room entrance he blew his horn. Jackie, a former emergency room and hospice nurse, asked for a stretcher, and it took five people to get the more than 200-pound victim transferred on it. When asked to identify him, they only knew the name of the man's workplace, and not his name.

Later, she learned that he was Justin Adams and he had undergone more than 20 surgeries for two broken legs, a ruptured bladder, a shattered pelvis, hip damage, and lacerations on his head. In addition, one of his legs had to be amputated above the knee.

After this distressing experience, Jackie was thankful to receive a text from her daughter in Phil Campbell who assured them that none of the family had been injured. However, her daughter's home had been totally destroyed.

"God blessed me so graciously that day," she reflected. "My daughter's home was just brick and lumber."

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Customer Service Video Features Lauderdale County Staff

The staff of the Lauderdale County Health Department was honored with a celebration on April 12. The party was held because the county participated in the taping of a “mini-documentary” on customer service for the National Title X Training Center. Alabama was one of three states represented, and Lauderdale County will represent five minutes of the 12-minute video.

The video presentation will be used for a training series across the nation. Lauderdale was chosen to represent Alabama from the southeast region due to its exceptional site in serving patients “with warmth, flexibility, compassion and with an overall customer service that goes above and beyond the norm.”

Annie Vosel, B.S.N., R.N., Director, Title X Family Planning, Bureau of Family Health Services, stated the staff did a fantastic job, and everything was organized so efficiently.

“The staff is to be complimented for being on board and cooperative for a smooth taping,” she stated. “The staff came with a ‘can do’ attitude and they represented Alabama and our southern sister states quite well.”

The video will be shared with employees in the entire state when completed.

Ramona Hawkins, R.N., CRNP, nurse administrator, Public Health Area 1, sent congratulations to the entire staff of Lauderdale County and her accolades for the job they do daily.



Customer service that goes beyond the norm was demonstrated as Lauderdale County Health Department staff, pictured here, taped a video for the National Title X Training Center.

Melanie Rightmyer Honored with Gold Ambassador Award for Work with Power to End Stroke

The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Power To End Stroke movement is an education and awareness campaign that embraces and celebrates the culture, energy, creativity and lifestyles of Americans. It unites people to help make an impact on the high incidence of stroke within their communities. Central to the Power To End Stroke Campaign is the Power To End Stroke Ambassador program.

Melanie Rightmyer, director of the Cardiovascular Health Unit, was presented the Gold Ambassador Award in the association’s second annual recognition ceremony April 4 at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. She was given the award for her work in recruiting ambassadors from

every county health department, participating in the execution of numerous Power to End Stroke activities, working to identify funding to support the dissemination of educational materials statewide, and hosting stroke awareness satellite conferences.

Monique Wilson, health equity regional director of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, said, “We can make a significant difference by educating others. Power To End Stroke raises awareness and creates behavior changes within high-risk communities. Melanie Rightmyer is a community leader who has championed the issue of stroke by becoming an ambassador for the campaign.”

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Alabama Department of Public Health

Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public’s health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public’s health and to provide caring quality services.

Alabama’s Health

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- Jim McVay, Dr. P.A..... Director, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
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Montgomery District Dietetic Association Donates to Food Bank

To celebrate National Nutrition Month, the Montgomery District Dietetic Association sponsored a food drive during March. Nonperishable foods were collected at Baptist Medical Center and the Alabama Department of Public Health in Montgomery. The food was donated to the Montgomery Area Food Bank.

In a departmental news release, it was noted that canned food is an easy way to add vitamins and minerals and canned food is available without added sodium or sugar. Canned fruit, preferably packed in its own juice, can be added to salads or used as a snack. Rinsing canned vegetables before they are heated also can reduce sodium content. Some canned meats, such as tuna packed in water, have the American Heart Association symbol on the can, making choosing a healthier version easier.

In 2012, the Montgomery Area Food Bank distributed approximately 19 million pounds of food across 35 counties. The food bank serves over 330,000 people annually. The

Jackie Kerby, continued from page 1

The night wasn't over, though. Jackie's youngest son drove up to help them locate missing people, including one of her patients whose home was demolished. They searched in vain for the elderly woman for two hours, and then were relieved to hear that she had not been at home at the time of the storm. None of her patients, all of whom were homebound, was lost or injured, which she believes is a real blessing.

Jackie's uncle, the Lawrence County sheriff, also needed her help that night to account for everyone and to triage those whose wounds were less severe. So she put on a volunteer arm band to help.

Rightmyer continued from page 2

Dr. George T. French, Miles College president, was the honorary chair for this year's Power to End Stroke Recognition and Recruitment Reception sponsored by HealthSouth. The reception is an opportunity to invite key opinion leaders to gain an understanding of the issues of stroke in African Americans. This event was held to recruit, inspire and assign goals to ambassadors as well as recognize stand-out ambassadors and their accomplishments in the community.

This event served as a kickoff for American Stroke Month. During May, stroke awareness events across the country will rally communities, stroke volunteers and those passionate about spreading stroke messages in their communities.

foods collected through this food drive will become a part of a larger picture, one that makes the difference between hunger and health to families across the state.



Montgomery District Dietetic Association members Gail Mask, Anna Patterson, Michael Polis and Mim Gaines are ready to deliver food to the Montgomery Area Food Bank.

"Everybody pitched in," Jackie said. "I was amazed. Every hour people came around bringing food and water."

Sadly, 14 county residents died. On the one-year anniversary of the storm, Jackie received a phone call from Justin's mother to personally thank her for saving her son's life. Later she was able to reunite with Justin through her association with another family member.

Jackie said Justin thanked her and apologized about the off-color language he remembers using on the way to the hospital, and they laugh about it now. They can now "pull the blessings out" of the remembrance of the day. "He's a sweetheart," she said of Justin. "It is a blessing for me for him to come back into my life."



Elana Parker Merriweather presents the American Heart Association crystal trophy to Melanie Rightmyer April 4.

Leaders Honored at Alabama Public Health Association Conference

The Alabama Public Health Association recognized persons, groups and organizations from across the state who demonstrated exceptional merit during the past year in the field of public health. Awards Chairman Ricky Elliott recognized award recipients at the association's 57th Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Hill University Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham April 4. A description of the awards and scholarships presented and this year's recipients follows.

The D. G. Gill Award is given to an individual who makes exceptional contributions to benefit Alabama's public health. This year's honor was presented to **Stacey Adams** of Selma, communities coordinator for the Alabama Strategic Alliance for Health Program which covers 15 counties in west Alabama.



Stacey Adams and Mim Gaines

Her nominator stated, "She is never anything but professional and courteous and always willing to help facilitate whatever needs to be done with a gracious attitude. You can always count on Stacey to do whatever she is assigned with grace and efficiency and know that she always represents the department well." Others praised her initiative and "excellent grasp of our broad mission in public health."



Annette Hurst and Ricky Elliott

The Virginia Kendrick Award is presented to an individual who provides notable service to the people of Alabama while serving public health in a supportive role. During her 19 years of employment with the department, **Annette Hurst** has served notably in a variety of positions including home health aide supervisor, admission nurse, home care services care coordinator, home health supervisor, education specialist, and currently as nurse manager for Public Health Area V.

Letters of support stated, "Annette is deeply devoted to the nursing profession and serves in her community by providing care to vulnerable populations and encouraging those around her with a given leadership to minister to others."

The North Alabama Medical Reserve Corps was the recipient of the Guy M. Tate Award. The corps provides an integral role in promoting and enhancing community health through multiple programs such as the 2011 tornado event, autism awareness, tobacco cessation and developing a Junior Medical Reserve Corps in Marshall County, the only one of its kind in the state. The corps promotes and protects public health throughout a 14-county region.

The Guy M. Tate Award is given to a public health employee, group or



North Alabama Medical Reserve Corps Director Pam Toney and Coordinator Brooke Rawlins

agency providing outstanding service or contribution. The recipient of this award must have 10 years experience or less in public health with service promoting and protecting public health in Alabama which goes beyond the daily job assignment.

The Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence recognizes an individual, group or organization that, through excellence in work, has made a significant impact on some aspect of public health in Alabama. Nominees are not required to have a direct affiliation with or represent any specific discipline, group or organization. Rather, they should represent excellence in effort and significant achievement toward the promotion and protection of public health.

This year's recipient, **Viki Brant**, is director of program operations at the Bureau of Children's Health Insurance. During her 26-year public health career she has made significant contributions to the Alabama Public Health Association by serving in numerous leadership capacities, including as president. She has directed several public health programs including the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Detection Program which now provides screening services statewide.

A letter of support noted her sharing of public health messages "from Cuba

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Viki Brant

to Cape Town, South Africa” through her frequent foreign mission trips. Another said, “Viki has a philanthropic heart that carries over to the work she does with CHIP. She works tirelessly to ensure the program is meeting standards and objectives that are required to allow the work of insuring children to continue.”

Jane Neill, WIC coordinator for Choctaw, Hale, Marengo and Sumter counties in Public Health Area 7, was named recipient of the Frederick S. Wolf Award, an award which recognizes an individual who has been active in public health at the local level for more than 10 years. This person selflessly gives back to the community and is efficient, dedicated, and professional in delivering public health services.

Coworkers praised her willingness “to pitch in whenever needed, whether it relates to nutrition, clerical or even janitorial” and her help in developing



Jane Neill and Chad Kent

and implementing ideas and carrying projects through to completion. She also works “to make a difference” for her church and community and has secured community grants.

The Anne M. Smith Excellence in Public Health Nursing Award is presented to the nurse who exemplifies the mission of public health nursing in Alabama, which is “to assure conditions in which individuals, families and communities can be healthy utilizing the unique expertise of public health nurses to assess, plan and implement programs which promote health and prevent disease.”

This year’s recipient **Delia Reynolds**, HIV/AIDS coordinator for Public Health Area 10, has been described as someone who “is tireless in her efforts to reach the community in monthly community coalition meetings.” In 2012 alone, she conducted and attended more than 86 community events.



Delia Reynolds

Ms. Reynolds has served as preceptor for many student nurses “who leave with an essential and positive understanding of the public health vision and mission.” In serving as the on-call nurse for Covenant Hospice, she provides care for patients with extensive and serious medical problems and “is always willing to lend a helping hand when needed or merely be a physical presence when the occasion may necessitate.”

Scholarships Awarded

The association presented **Anna Bianchi** of Tallassee the Ira L. Myers Scholarship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham where she is pursuing a Master’s of Public Health degree. Ms. Bianchi is interested in becoming involved in research on health and gender; and the rural health care initiatives in Alabama. A 2012 graduate of Birmingham Southern College, she holds a B.A. degree in religion.



Anna Bianchi

Ginger Letson, Healthy Child Care Alabama nurse consultant of Public Health Area II, was presented the Ruth Harrell Nursing Scholarship. She currently provides training, education and outreach for day care providers, centers and churches licensed by the Department of Human Resources. Ms. Letson, who has 18 years of community and public health nursing experience, is enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing degree program at Jacksonville State University.



Ginger Letson and Ruth Harrell

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Two Inducted into ALPHA Hall of Fame Class of 2013

The ALPHA Hall of Fame is intended to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the enhancement and advancement of the association. Ruth Harrell, R.N., M.P.H., Hall of Fame Committee Chair, announced the induction of two persons into the Class of 2013: **Jamie Manning, R.N., M.S.S.**, and **Donald Williamson, M.D.**

Ms. Manning has been an active member of ALPHA since the beginning of her public health career and served on the Board of Directors for more than a decade. Her dedication and commitment to the association is demonstrated by the manner in which she has been chosen by her peers to serve in numerous leadership roles throughout her involvement, especially in developing policies and procedures.



Jamie Manning

Alabama's State Health Officer, **Dr. Donald Williamson**, has been a member and strong supporter of the Alabama Public Health Association since he joined the department in 1986. One of the criteria for selection to the ALPHA Hall of Fame is that the inductee must have made, or is making, a significant contribution through advancement of public health. Dr.



Dr. Williamson

Williamson's achievements on behalf of the people of Alabama include his effective leadership which has resulted in new construction or renovation of most health department buildings in the state, his support of increased access to health care, his establishment of in-house video communication services, and other achievements too numerous to mention.

Article Explores 'Suicide in the Middle Years'

Debra K. Hodges, Ph.D., research unit director of the Injury Prevention Branch, recently had an article she coauthored titled "Suicide in the Middle Years" published in a special edition of the Alabama Counseling Association Journal.

The article presents an overview of adult suicide in the United States and Alabama. It focuses on economic issues and the recent occurrences of natural disasters as contributors. It also provides risk factors and early, acute warning signs for potentially suicidal adults as well as selected strategies for preventing suicides.

Alabama's suicide rate for 2010 is 14.1 per 100,000 population, and Alabama's suicide rate has exceeded the national average for the past three decades. Studies suggest that an upsurge that began in 2006 may have been caused by a series of natural disasters combined with the economic downturn.

The person at highest risk of suicide, demographically speaking, is a white or American Indian male over age 34, unemployed, living alone without significant social support or social life. The probability of suicide is much higher when other psychosocial risk factors are added—

substance abuse, depression and chronic illness.

In addition to describing Alabama suicides by age group, racial and gender disparities, methods used and trends, the article explains how one personally helps someone who is suicidal. These ways include learning the warning signs and symptoms of acute suicidal ideation and asking questions when someone seems suicidal. The national suicide hotline number which links callers to certified crisis centers is 1-800-273-TALK.

The article can be found in Volume 38, Number 2, of the journal. Co-authors of the article are David W. Coombs and Connie Kohler, Ph.D., both from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health.

The Alabama Department of Public Health was awarded a Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant for a three-year period to fund suicide prevention programs for Alabama communities and a statewide media awareness campaign.



Debra Hodges

Workforce Development Opportunity: Toastmasters International Advances Speaking, Leadership Skills

Are you looking to ignite your career? Strengthen your leadership skills? Or just become a more confident communicator? Toastmasters International can help you achieve these goals.

Toastmasters International is an organization founded to help its members hone their speaking and leadership skills. The mission of a Toastmasters club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every member has the opportunity to develop communication and leadership skills, which in turn foster self-confidence and personal growth.

Each meeting is a learn-by-doing workshop in which participants prepare short presentations, perform impromptu speeches, and give honest feedback to presenters. The positive, no-pressure atmosphere of the meetings encourages all participants to communicate openly and confidently while gaining experience in public speaking.

Tower Toastmasters in Montgomery is a local club that meets in Conference Room 1770 of the RSA Tower each Tuesday at noon. Meetings are open to any persons within the department or the general public who are interested in improving their communication and leadership skills. Members range from those new to public speaking to more experienced speakers.

Dr. Tom Miller, Deputy Director for Medical Affairs, is a Tower Toastmasters member. According to Dr. Miller,

“Like most things in life, you get better with practice, and it is no different when it comes to making a presentation that you want to be logical, concise and informative. I joined Toastmasters a few months ago because I want to do a better job communicating, whether I’m speaking or writing. The structured process, the peer support and the feedback have been a very positive experience.”

Feel free to visit one of the weekly meetings to see what Toastmasters is all about. In the meantime, contact Teresa Fair, Teresa.Fair@adph.state.al.us, or 334-206-7941 for more information. Toastmasters chapters are located in areas throughout the state. To learn about a location convenient for you, visit <http://www.toastmasters.org/>.

By Teresa Fair, R.D.,L.D.



Newsletter Seeks to Reach Environmentalists

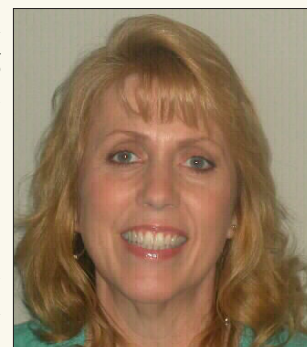
Phyllis Fenn, standardization officer of the Food and Lodging Branch of the Bureau of Environmental Services, has originated and designed an updated newsletter, *The Standard Gazette*, as a way to connect environmental staff across the state and to keep the lines of communication open in the current climate of cutbacks.

“I have worked at the local level, and in a rural county you can feel isolated,” Ms. Fenn said. “This is a way to reach out and give more confidence to environmentalists in doing their jobs. During this time of limited resources, it is more important than ever that our hard work in the field be efficient as well as effective. We hope in the future to get the standardization program up and running again, but in the meantime this should help environmentalists stay connected.”

Miscellaneous environmental questions that have come into the bureau and their answers are included in the newsletter. The May issue, for example, provides the effective date for restaurant inspection rule changes, describes the

correct location of hand sinks, and recommends ways of ensuring protection from contamination during kitchen tours.

The newsletter also provides general information such as reminding readers about an upcoming satellite conference and gives user-friendly tips about the food code. A popular feature is the “brain teaser” question posed to readers. The environmentalist giving the first correct answer is designated as “Brainiac of the Month” in the next issue.



Phyllis Fenn edits the *Standard Gazette*.

Departmental employees may view the March, April and May 2013 editions of the monthly publication in the Lotus Notes Document Library under the category Environmental FML, Newsletter or Standard Gazette.

Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Georgette Blackmon
Center for Health Statistics
from customer
Jacksonville, Ala.

Sandra Daniels
Center for Health Statistics
from Jennifer T. Brown
Montgomery, Ala.

Annette Johnson-Bell
Center for Health Statistics
from George Pallas
Powell, Ohio

Sandra Levert
Center for Health Statistics
from Leona B. Douglas
Address unlisted

Oluwaseum Koriko
Office of Radiation Control
from R. Keith Morgan, M.D.
Arab, Ala.

Theresa Mulkey
Center for Health Statistics
from Teresa L. Harkins
Susan Smith
Pensacola, Fla.

Pam Nix
Tuscaloosa County
Health Department
from Remona Winston,
R.N., B.S.N.
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Kathie Peters
Center for Health Statistics
from Lt. Col. Kevin S. Cochie
Washington, D.C.
Veta L. Pair
New Brockton, Ala.

Dylan Sasser
Logistics-Property
from James Coley
Montgomery Ala.

Reginald Strickland
Center for Health Statistics
from the
Hon. Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey
Montgomery, Ala.

Beatrice Zeigler
Center for Health Statistics
from Elaine Moore Kane
Malinda M. Whittington
Atlanta, Ga.

Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently.

February

Marcella Coblentz
Limestone County Health Department

Judy Durden
Escambia County Health Department

Robert Miller
Clay County Health Department

Marilyn Paramore
Public Health Area X

Edith Parker
Cullman County Health Department

Iris Taylor
Conecuh County Health Department

March

Debra Bolling
Public Health Area III

Donald Cardwell
Public Health Area I

William Daniel
Public Health Area I

Betty Lauderdale
Marshall County Health Department

Benny Lee
Facilities Management

Roger Prewett
Facilities Management

Larry Rush
Shelby County Health Department

Patsy Watson
Talladega County Health Department

Michelle Zeigler
Office of Human Resources

April

Clara Atkins
Dallas County Health Department

Mitchelle Brooks
Public Health Area II

Vernell Calloway
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

James Coles
Bureau of Environmental Services

Barbara Daly
Limestone County Health Department

Vurlie Dexter
STD Division

Martha Jackson
Public Health Area IV

Jane Langford
Bureau of Clinical Laboratories

Kay Mitchell
Public Health Area I

Reba Overton
Shelby County Health Department

Mildred Parker
Madison County Health Department

Photo by Courtney Chestnutt



Coworkers at the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories honored Jeannine B. Parker, microbiologist laboratory supervisor, upon her retirement during a Laboratory Week picnic.

Wanda Ratcliffe
Marshall County Health Department

Beverly Stephens
Cullman County Health Department

Veralyn Turk
Family Health Services

Marie Walters
Bureau of Environmental Services

Euveta Whitlock
Baldwin County Health Department

First Montgomery Mother-Daughter 5K Enjoys Great Turnout

More than 150 persons participated in the first Mother-Daughter 5K and 1-Mile Walk Event held in Montgomery May 11 at the Wilson YMCA in Montgomery.

Michael Briddell, director of public information and external affairs with the City of Montgomery, brought greetings to the participants on behalf of the city. Morning anchor Tonya Terry of WSFA-TV served as the grand marshal for the event and emceed the awards ceremony. She also participated by walking/running the route with her family. Also attending were the chair and vice chair from the Office of Women's Health Advisory Board, Nan Priest and Margie Findlay from Birmingham. Other advisory board members present included the event coordinator, Nancy Bishop, from Prattville, and Linda Roussel and Leigh Minchew from the Mobile area.

Baptist Health, presenting sponsor, had staff on-site to offer health screenings for the community. Other sponsors included Cupcakes by Tish, Earth Fare, New Park, The Montgomery Biscuits, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Wilson YMCA Park Crossing, WSFA-TV, ADPH Get a Healthy Life Campaign, Family Sunshine Center, Nancy's Italian Ice, Public Health Area 8 and World Gym Fitness Center. Vendors were on-site for the entire family to enjoy.

The best overall winner was a female, Holly Holt, who came in first with a time of 20 minutes, 37 seconds, followed by William Mims, with a time of 21.02. Both received cash

prizes provided by the New Park Neighborhood. Mother-Daughter winners were Rosemary Smith and Amanda Smith; they received ticket certificates that entitle each of them to four super box tickets for a Montgomery Biscuits game during the 2013 regular season.

There were also three generations and multiple grandmother/granddaughter walkers as well as grandfather/granddaughter walkers.

"This run/walk event helped bring families together to celebrate the health of our grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sisters," said Jessica Hardy, director of the Office of Women's Health. "This event increased awareness of women's health issues in Alabama and highlighted resources that are available for better health and wellness for women in our state."

"On the Move to Improve Women's Health" was the slogan for the event. Proceeds will be used to help sustain initiatives addressing obesity and healthy lifestyle choices such as Heart Health Champions training, New Leaf, BodyWorks and Girls on the Run that are offered in local communities of Alabama. A portion of the proceeds will be used to sponsor selected girls' participation in the 2013 Fall Girls on The Run Program.

For information about women's health initiatives, please visit alabamahealthywomen.com.



Three generations of families enjoyed the event, the day before Mother's Day. Shown are Madalyn Long, Christi Long and Teresa Dingler.



A grandfather joins his granddaughter in the 5K.

HHS Offers Moms Knowledge, Help and Support Through a New Breastfeeding Initiative

Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA, has announced the launch of It's Only Natural, a new public education campaign that aims to raise awareness among African American women of the importance of and benefits associated with breastfeeding and provide helpful tips.

"One of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant and herself is to breastfeed," said Surgeon General Benjamin. "By raising awareness, the success rate among mothers who want to breastfeed can be greatly improved through active support from their families, their friends and the community."

Breastfeeding offers mothers and their babies a healthy start. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 80 percent of all women in the United States - regardless of status, race or income - start out breastfeeding. Among African American women, the breastfeeding rate is almost 55 percent - up from just 35 percent

in the 1970s. However, while these rates are improving, breastfeeding rates among African American women remain lower than the rates of other ethnicities in the U.S., particularly among those living in the south.

This gap may indicate that African American mothers face barriers to meeting breastfeeding goals and need additional support to start and continue breastfeeding. It's Only Natural was specifically designed to provide materials that reflect the experience of African American moms.

It's Only Natural was developed to equip new moms with practical information and emotional support from peers, as well as tips and education about the benefits of breastfeeding and how to make it work in their own lives. All of the material is uniquely crafted for African American women. Materials include:

- video testimonials from new moms talking about the challenges they have overcome, providing

breastfeeding tips, sharing their individual stories, and much more;

- articles on a variety of topics ranging from laws supporting breastfeeding to how to fit breastfeeding into your daily life;
- two fact sheets, which contain proper holding and latching techniques, as well as information on managing discomfort and how much milk is enough; and
- radio public service announcements.

To learn more about the campaign, visit www.womenshealth.gov/ItsOnlyNatural.

For information on breastfeeding, contact the State Lactation Coordinator, Michell Grainger, MSN, RNC, IBCLC, WIC Program, (334) 206-2921.



Women's Health Division Director Sherry George Retires

Sherry K. George, director of the Division of Women's Health, concluded a public health career that began 37 years ago in the same program area. In nearly four decades of service to the department, she took on increasingly responsible tasks and has worked for six bureau directors and two deputy directors. During her tenure, she was involved in all Bureau of Family Health Services programs with the exception of WIC.

"I have really enjoyed working in the area of family health; it's always changing and a challenge," she said. "I was able to work with a lot of great people."

Ms. George exemplifies how dedication and hard work in the department can lead to advancement. When she

arrived as secretary to Dr. Clay Wells, then director of Maternal and Child Health, in 1975, she had already worked for other state agencies for 10 years in clerical positions.

A year later, Dr. Robert Goldenberg was named bureau director and she was given the opportunity to work on grant applications and attend a federal grants management and writing workshop. During this time, prenatal care clinics were implemented throughout the state and the State Perinatal law creating the State Perinatal Program passed.

In the meantime, she was attending night classes at Troy State University in Montgomery where she earned

a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1981. While still working full-time, she received a master's degree in public administration with a specialty in public health at Auburn University at Montgomery in 1987.

In 1982 she was promoted serving as the Title X Family Planning Training Coordinator, the Maternal and Child Health Advisory Council Coordinator, and supervisor of the bureau data entry staff.

During the period from 1984 to 1988, she was given added responsibility for statewide Patient Flow Analysis in family planning clinics; served as coordinator to the Task Force on

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Carl Evans Receives the James H. Baker Exemplar Award for 2012

The James H. Baker Exemplar Award was established by State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson in 2004. This award is presented each year to a Division of TB Control staff member who best represents the standard of professional excellence and dedication to public health set by Jim Baker, a retired X-ray technician in the division who served for 40 years.

During 2012, a temporary loss of staff in Area 5 forced the division to ask Evans and his team from Public Health Area 2 to care for patients and conduct investigations in an expanded area of operations -- this required him to assure TB coverage for nearly all of the counties in the northeastern quadrant of the state.

Upon receiving this recognition, Evans said, "I'm very thankful to have received this award, knowing the standards Jim Baker set in TB Control. I would also like to thank the Area 2

TB staff, clinic nurses in Area 5, and TB staff from across the state for all their help in making this happen."

"Throughout 2012, Mr. Evans and his team met this challenge with professionalism and grace," Pam Barrett, Director for the Division of TB

Control, said. "During this time frame, they continued to meet or exceed TB program performance achieved at the state and national levels. This achievement in the face of adversity serves as an example to his colleagues at ADPH, and to his contemporaries across the Southeastern United States."



Dr. William C. Bailey, left, chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee for TB, presents the James H. Baker Exemplar Award to Carl Evans. Baker, the retired employee for whom the award is named, is shown at right.

George, cont'd from page 10
Prevention and Perinatal Health; and, as a member of the department's Integrated Core Services Team, visited clinics throughout the state providing technical assistance.

After promotions as public health services administrator in 1988 and again in 1991, Sherry had responsibility for management of the State Perinatal Program; took on special project grant initiatives and served as the newly funded PRAMS Project assistant director.

In 1989, under Doris Barnett's leadership, she coordinated and implemented a drug abuse screening study of childbearing-age women in Alabama public health clinics and the Comp Clinic at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, in collaboration with UAB staff. She co-authored the study which was

published in 1990 by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She was given an exemplary achievement award by the department for taking on this responsibility in the absence of another bureau employee.

After Dr. Tom Miller became bureau director in 1993, she was given responsibility for the Medicaid Maternity Waiver Program, was the first editor of the bureau newsletter "Common Ground," managed the Pap Smear Follow-up Program and was responsible for preparation of the MCH Block Grant application.

In January 1996, Sherry became director of the Division of Women's Health and Title X Family Planning Director. In 1997, she took responsibility for the child health programs.

A major accomplishment of her career, Ms. George believes, is her work in the

department's effort to obtain the 1115 Family Planning Waiver which was implemented in 2000 and continues today. In 2005, she was promoted to health services administrator III.

In her well-deserved retirement, she has made a list of 25 things she would like to do, including taking art and cooking classes, writing, volunteering in the community, and traveling.



Sherry George



Calendar of Events



May 22

People First Language,
9:30-11 a.m.

For more information contact
Maury West, (334) 206-3383.



June 10

Talk About It! - Marketing
Community-based
Interventions through Provider
and Community Ambassador
Outreach, noon-2:30 p.m.

For more information
contact Video Communications,
(334) 206-5618.



June 12

Home Health Nurses, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact
Shirley Offutt, (334) 206-2481.



June 13

Reinventing Maternal and
Child Health: Coordinating the
Boundaries Between Social
Determinants and Clinical Care,
noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information
contact Video Communications,
(334) 206-5618.



June 17

Alabama Breast and Cervical
Cancer Early Detection
Program, 1-3 p.m.

For more information contact
Kitty Norris, (334) 206-6227.



July 10

Home Health, 2-4 p.m.

For more information
contact Becky Leavins,
(334) 206-3867.



July 11

ADPH Statewide
Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m.

For more information
contact Video Communications,
(334) 206-5618.



July 16

The Criminalization of HIV in
the USA: or HIV/STIs and the
Law, noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information
contact Video Communications,
(334) 206-5618.



July 17

Safety in the Clinical Setting,
9-11 a.m.

For more information contact
Thresa Dix, (334) 206-3377.



July 17

Minority Health, 2-4 p.m.

For more information contact
Elana Parker Merriweather,
(334) 206-7980.



July 24

Maternal and Child Health,
noon-1:30 p.m.

For more information
contact Video Communications,
(334) 206-5618.