

# ALABAMA WIC

Promoting Healthy Women, Infants, and Children  
in Alabama

Volume 18, Number 1, March 2014

WIC WORKS!

WIC WORKS!

# Alabama State WIC Director

## *Amanda Martin, WIC Director*

I would first of all like to thank each of you for the opportunity to serve you as WIC Director. To some of you, I am a familiar face due to our interactions with Crossroads. For those of you that I have not met, I am making the commitment to meet you in the near future. I appreciate all that each of you do to make a difference in the lives of our WIC participants.

This year has certainly started with unique challenges. No one could have anticipated the federal government shutdown on October 1, 2013. Because our fiscal year 2014 funds had not been allocated, the Alabama WIC Program was forced to view the budget and make some tough decisions. I learned during my short tenure on the job as WIC Director that WIC participants redeem approximately \$300,000 in food benefits daily. Because of the financial obligation of issued food benefits, it was decided to move participants to one month issuance for the duration of October. Fortunately, we were able to reverse that decision effective November 1, 2013, and have reinstated the option to issue up to three months of food benefits.

In January and February 2014, Alabama experienced inclement weather that impacted travel and caused many clinics to close. Fortunately, the decision to close meant that you all and our participants were able to stay safe at home. I understand that you all worked hard to reschedule appointments or to have participants come in for food benefit issuance. Your hard work has paid off as Alabama's WIC caseload has continued to climb.

I want to stress that WIC is a customer service oriented program. Our budget for administrative and food costs is strictly dependent upon participants seen. Because our participation is declining and because our participant demographic is changing, the State WIC Office is launching a social media campaign. Campaign efforts include advertisements and commercials through the use of social media, cable television, movie theaters, gas pump toppers, parenting magazines, and radio. The above advertisement sources will not be available in all areas but have been targeted based upon declines in caseload. We can use this campaign to bring in participants but we need you all to keep them coming back to WIC. Remember, we are customer driven.

Over the past two years, we have continued to lose prenatal and child participants. For that reason, the above mentioned media campaign is focusing on areas that have lost the most participants. We want to encourage nutrition for healthy birth outcomes, healthy growth and development, and making healthy eating decisions for life.

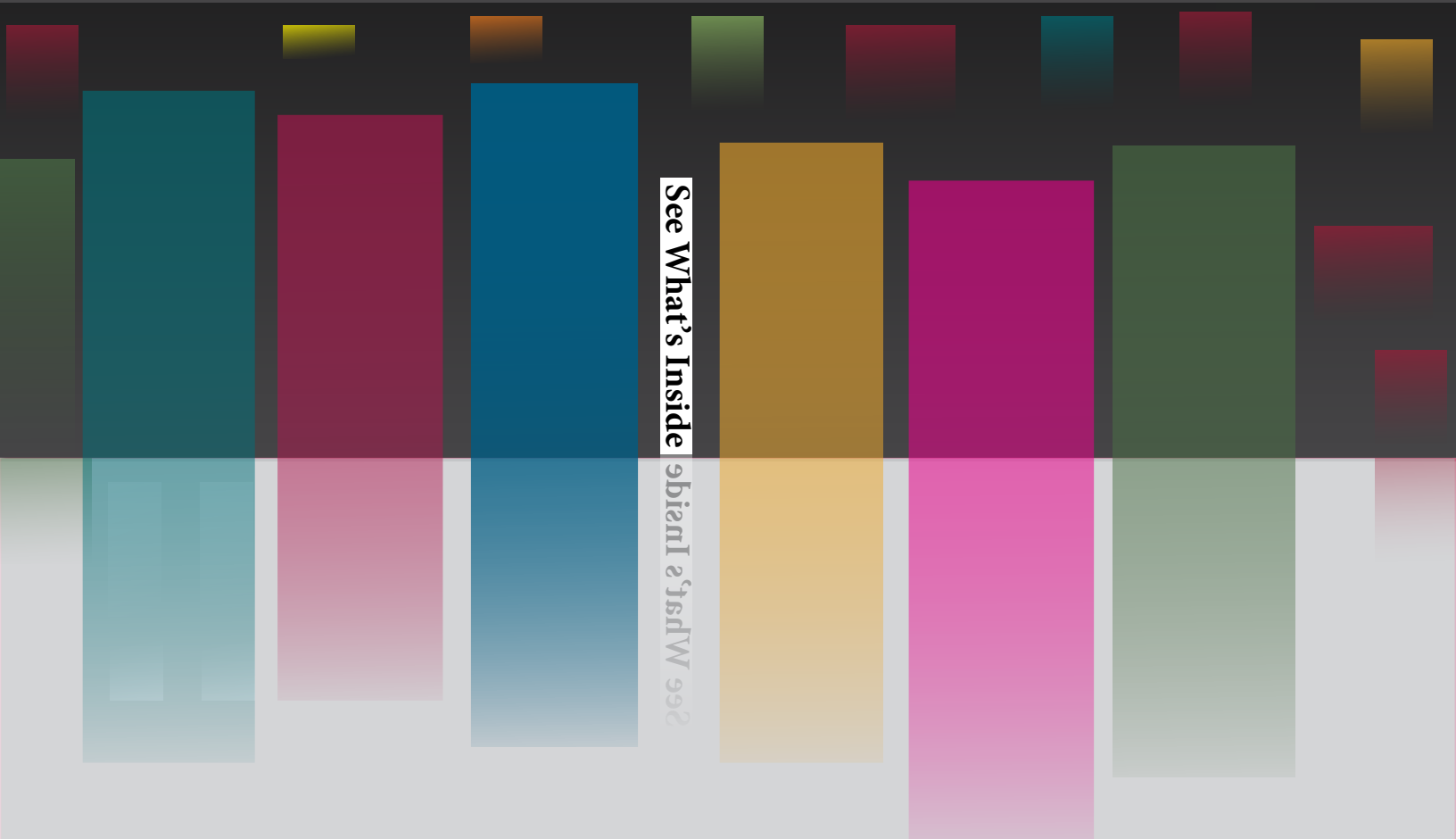
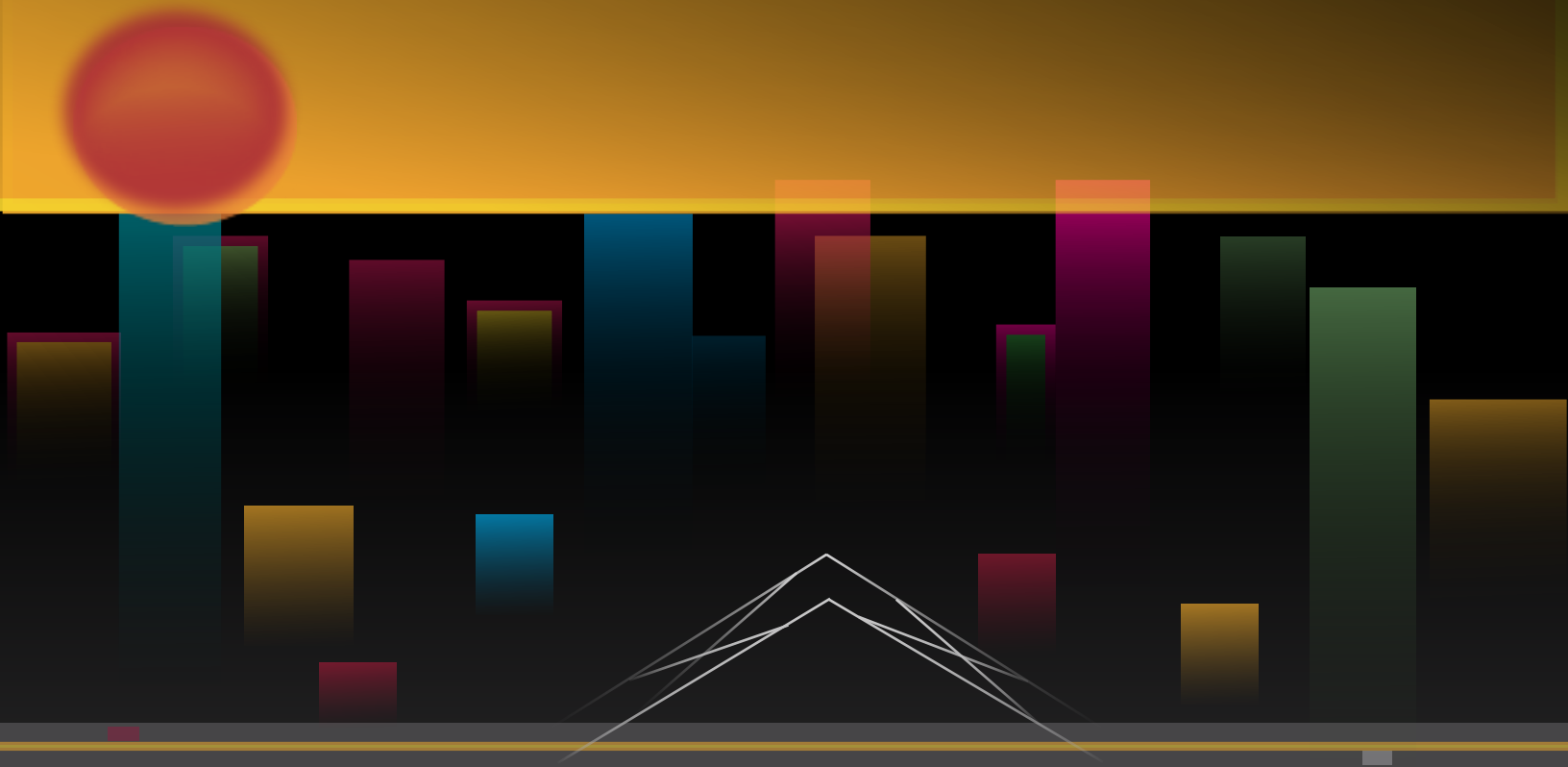
A positive caseload trend has been steadily occurring with our breastfeeding and breastfed participants. Alabama WIC began participating in the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling program in late 2005. This program has worked in 29 sites since 2005. Clinics with counselors have experienced an average breastfeeding rate increase of 23%. When viewing caseload trends this year, our breastfeeding moms and babies have held strong and in some cases increased even though our overall caseload has declined. This is due to the hard work of State and clinic staff!

Lastly, I would like to thank all of you for the time and commitment made to Crossroads. My thank you is especially heartfelt for Area 7 as you are currently piloting Crossroads. Denise Pope, Area 7 Nutrition Director, motivated her staff for pilot by sharing the following Crossroads facts. I hope they serve to motivate you all as we begin to rollout Crossroads throughout the state this summer.

- Crossroads is a family centric record meaning all family members are viewed together.
- Crossroads is an electronic medical record. There are no paper charts to pull or file.
- Crossroads users will be able to view participant records throughout the state and easily transfer participants.
- Crossroads will automatically terminate participants thus eliminating termination reports.
- Crossroads ensures that all family members pick up benefits at the same time.
- Crossroads allows family food benefits to be combined thus preparing our participants for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).
- Crossroads will suggest appointment types for family members and make appointments for them at one time.

Thank you for all that you do for WIC. I appreciate your abilities to rise above some unique challenges and meet the needs of our participants.

# ALABAMA WIC CONTINUES



See What's Inside  
Alabama's WIC



Area 1 is contributing to the training of future leaders in public health by hosting some University of Alabama Coordinated Program in Dietetics students during the 2013 fall semester. The students that were trained in Area 1 last fall were Kristen Guenther, Cassidy White, and Sidney Smith.

Cassidy White, one of the University of Alabama Coordinated Program in Dietetics students is pictured with the breastfeeding educational display she completed.



*Cassidy White, University of Alabama Coordinated Program.*

Kaitlin Robbins, dietetic intern from Oakwood College in Huntsville also completed her public health rotation in September 2013.

Area 1 offers its congratulations and best wishes to following retiring WIC staff:

Beth Romo, Registered Nurse and WIC Coordinator for Winston County retired September 1, 2013, after 30 years of service. Linda Hill, ASA II, Lauderdale County retired November 1, 2013, after 14 years of service. Sheila Woods, Office Manager for Walker County began her public health career with WIC retired after 28 years of service on January 1, 2014.



During the federal budget crisis, Area 2 fielded hundreds of phone calls, cringed through hours of no-shows, survived the one-month issuance, and yet managed to close out fiscal year 2013 with 22,525 active WIC participants.

We have recently welcomed several new staff members who have hit the ground running, some of which joined us from the Lifecare program. The new ASA II WIC employees are Connie Bailey, Cullman County; Denise Myslak and Priscilla Glover in Jackson County; Paula Gilliam, Limestone County; Meschelle Naylor, Lawrence County; Judy Coleman and Vernon Stone, Madison County; and Glenda Chapman in Morgan County. We also had some staff movements. Stella Clark, ASA II, moved from Morgan to Cullman County, and Renee Overton, RN, joined the Marshall County clinic, spending most of her time as a WIC provider. Alice Mitchell, ASA III from Jackson County, has moved to Marshall County as Office Manager. Robin Thornberry, RD, will be taking over the WIC coordinator responsibilities in Marshall County when Penny Brothers, RN, retires January 1, 2014. Penny has been a WIC provider 17 of her 40 plus years of service. She will be greatly missed by the staff and participants as she enjoys retirement but, as her husband said, our loss is his gain. We wish Penny the best!

Sadly, we have had 2 deaths of Area 2 staff members in just over a year. We lost Carrol Kelley, ASA II in Marshall County, in October 2012. Marshall County staff members have really missed her. Early December 2013 brought the passing of a great friend to WIC and our staff in Limestone County—interpreter, Millie Vickers. We will miss Millie's kindness and willingness to assist the WIC participants.

Our clinics were busy with breastfeeding promotion through activities such as bulletin board creation and special recognition of breastfeeding participants. Limestone County participated in a Family Fun Day. Staff members provided nutrition information to attendees, and had hula hoops available to encourage families to play together.

During September, Fruits and Veggies—More Matters Month, Area 2 counties utilized materials provided by the state WIC office to increase emphasis on fruits and vegetables in the diet. There were coloring contests, bulletin boards, and recipe swaps, among other promotions.

The, below, frozen fruit/yogurt cups recipe is an example of the type of recipes used in the WIC recipe swap during Fruit and Veggies - More Matters month:

### **Frozen Fruit/Yogurt Cups**

1 - 20 oz can crushed pineapple  
5 bananas  
40 oz plain low fat yogurt  
Mash bananas in large bowl.  
Stir in the pineapple and the yogurt.  
Spoon into mini muffin cups with liners.  
Freeze until firm.

Enjoy

This recipe will make 70 -80 little snacks.

Jessie Simmons, RD, WIC coordinator in Limestone County, was interviewed by WAFF 48 television station concerning the purchase of local fresh produce. The nutritional emphasis was on purchasing fruits and vegetables as part of a farm-to-table series. Kisha Franklin, NA, and a WIC participant were also interviewed by WAFF 48 at the Morgan County Farmers Market to promote the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. In addition to the TV appearance, Jessie spoke at the Jerod Powers Football Camp in Decatur this summer. She encouraged the middle and high school students to select healthy snacks and beverages.

WIC coordinators and clerks gathered at the training clinic in October for Crossroads exposure training. Positive responses were heard from all. Four of our WIC providers served as Crossroads testers.

My Plate handouts were at the forefront during health fairs in Douglas, Huntsville and Scottsboro throughout the year, and at a Cinco de Mayo Festival in Albertville. Jackson County enjoyed a record attendance of 250 visitors at their annual health fair in October.

Looking back to November 2013, Morgan County WIC staff partnered with a local church to provide a Thanksgiving turkey and a side dish for 130 WIC participants, and Limestone County entered the Christmas door decorating contest. The WIC door won the Blue Ribbon! Congratulations Limestone County!

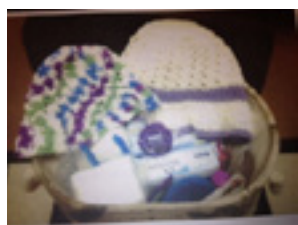


## Area 3



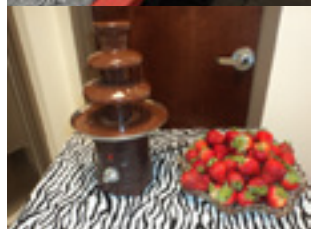
Renee Cole  
Nutrition Director

Area 3 has been very busy continuing to do outreach throughout the local communities. In Tuscaloosa alone, WIC information was presented at over ten local health fairs last fall. Our Tuscaloosa County Breastfeeding Coordinator displayed breastfeeding information at her table, and she gave away a beautiful gift basket to one of the breastfeeding moms that were in attendance.



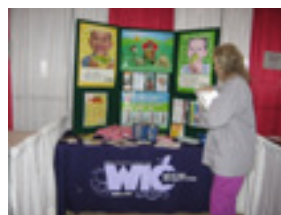
*L to R: Gift basket and Gloria Lewis, RD, LD with a WIC participant.*

Dorinda Jones, NA, and the entire Greene County WIC staff held a "Pamper the Mommy" day for all patients who were expecting. Dorinda had several speakers, she provided chicken salad, cupcakes, and chocolate covered strawberries as snacks. She also created a "WIC Family Fued" and divided the group into sides. Questions were centered around WIC proofs that could be used and WIC approved foods. Everything was decorated in red and zebra stripe. Many awesome gifts were given away.



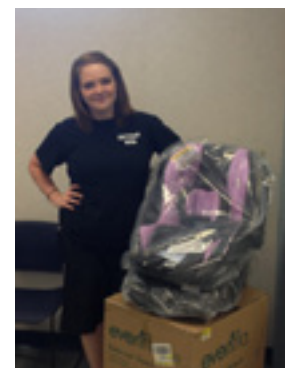
*Greene County's Pamper the Mommy Party decorations and Dorinda Jones, NA*

The Fayette County staff represented WIC at the Fayette County Fair. The staff created a very attractive WIC table and displayed a plethora of WIC incentive items.



*L to R: Fayette County staff setting up display table at the Fayette County Fair and completed Display Table*

Our Bibb County Nutrition Associate coordinated a baby shower in August 2013. The baby shower had quite a significant number of expectant moms in attendance. Both of the Bibb County Peer Counselors spoke about the benefits of breastfeeding. Many goodies and gifts were given away along with the grand prize, a car seat.



*Attendees of the Bibb County Baby Shower with their gifts.*



*Bibb County staff L to R: Nicole Jeffers, Peer Counselor; Sandy Wilson, Nutrition Associate; and Tanya Creel, Peer Counselor*



In August 2013 the Area 4 WIC staff gathered at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens for a day of Team Building/Training.



*L to R: Monica Sodipe and Anita Floyd (West End Health Center); and Betsy Smith (Central Health Center), and Melanie Jones (Eastern Health Center)*

*L to R: Kay McCormick (West End Health Center), Carolyn Scott (Western Health Center), Latanya Dovine (Central Health Center), Jan Morris (Morris Health Center), and Gloria Robinson (Eastern Health Center)*

In November 2013 Area 4 said “goodbye” to longtime employee Celisia Burke, Senior Nutritionist. Celisia worked with the WIC program for twenty years. She was initially employed at Eastern Health Center and then transitioned to the Morris Health Center. Celisia’s departure was celebrated with a traditional Thanksgiving spread, and we wish her the best in her retirement.



*L to R: Annette Gamble (Medical Clerk); Celisia Burke (Registered Dietitian, Licensed Dietitian); Jan Morris (Registered Dietitian); and Rachael Davidson (Medical Clerk)*

Over the last few months, our WIC family has expanded to include four new nutritionists and two new medical clerks which gives us a full staff for the first time in over three years!



*Four Nutritionists (L to R): Melanie Jones (Eastern Health Center); Ashley Culver (RD eligible West End Health Center); Elizabeth Cooley (Eastern Health Center); and Michelle Davis (Center Health Center); and two Medical Clerks (L to R): Tamar Barhan and Katrina Stewart (Eastern Health Center)*

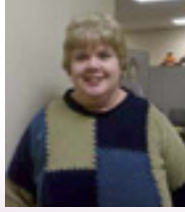
Other exciting new in Jefferson County is that two of our team members blessed us with new babies. In September 2013 we welcomed Lillie, daughter of Lindsay Adler, Nutrition Consultant. In addition, in January 2014 we welcomed Lauren, daughter of Tamara Andrews, Medical Clerk. Both babies are ‘Eating at Moms’ and are doing great!



*Lillie Adler*



*Lauren Andrews*



We would like to welcome Erin Cameron as the new Nutrition Associate for DeKalb County. Erin is a recent graduate of Auburn University, and we are glad to have her working with us! War Eagle!



*Erin Cameron, DeKalb County Nutrition Associate*

We would like to welcome Kristen Campbell as the new Nutrition Associate for Etowah County. Kristen is a graduate of Alabama A&M University with degrees in Nutrition and Food Science. We are glad to have her working with us!



*Kristen Campbell, Etowah County Nutrition Associate*





Area 6 Nutrition and Clerical staff attended an introduction to the new Crossroads system in Montgomery, Alabama where they learned the basics of Crossroads and were able to receive some hands on-training. There was excitement as well as some very positive feedback about the functionality of the new Crossroads system.

The Chambers County WIC Program now has a Peer Counseling Program. Two Peer Counselors, Stephanie Strong and Kendyle Nevels began working with this program in the recent months. We are very glad to welcome Stephanie and Kendyle to the Chambers County WIC Program and Public Health

### **In Memory:**

A long time Calhoun County WIC clerk, Marian Crumb, passed away in September after a short illness. Marian is remembered for her work ethic and attention to details. We all miss her infectious laugh!

### **Nutrition Staff Family News:**

Cathryn Bates, Nutrition Associate, Calhoun County has a new grandson, Aidan , born August 1, 2013. He joins a brother, Jaylen and a sister, Kennedi. "Sweet Nana" (Cathryn) loves spending time with her grandchildren!!

Becky Dawson, Nutrition Associate, Calhoun County, announces the birth of her first grandchild, Adilyn. Miss Adilyn was born July 2, 2013, and the proud parents are Bradley and Mary Dawson. Becky's daughter, Kristin, was married to Brett Barnes on November 1, 2013 at Lake Guntersville. Double blessings for the Dawson family!

Jenny Adams, Registered Dietitian for Clay, Cleburne, and Randolph Counties, is beaming with pride as her daughter Erica, a sophomore at Jackson State University, made the Dean's List for the Fall Semester. Congratulations, Erica!

Ava Minish, daughter of Amy Minish, Registered Dietitian, Calhoun County, performed in the Alabama Ballet's production of the Nutcracker in Anniston.

Anna Templeton, daughter of Cindy Templeton, Registered Dietitian, Nutrition Director, was married to Reid McDill in Heflin, Alabama on July 27, 2013. The happy couple lives in Auburn, Alabama. War Eagle!!

On January 2, 2014, Cindy Templeton became a first time grandmother. Henry Hastings Templeton was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, weighing 7 lbs 8oz . Henry's parents are Ryan and Brantley Templeton. He is welcomed with lots of love and "Cissy" is over the moon!



For the past several months, change seem to have been the theme in Area 7. Staff changes at work have caused us to say “goodbye” to some co-workers and “welcome back” to others.

The closure of the LifeCare program caused several staff changes in Dallas County. In September, Monique Tillis, ASA II and Debra Ellis, ASA II transferred to positions at the State Office in Montgomery. Monique Tillis, ASA II served as the lead WIC Clerk for the Dallas County Health Department. Lisa Gayle, ASA II has been assigned lead WIC Clerk responsibilities since Monique’s departure. Lisa has extensive experience in WIC which made for a smooth transition. We would like to welcome Margaret Chandler, ASA II and Vanessa Howard, ASA II to the clinic clerical staff at the Dallas County Health Department. Both have previously worked in the clinic, but they both have spent the past several years working with the LifeCare program.

Area 7 would like to welcome back to Nikki Sanford, Nutrition Associate, WIC. Nikki has spent the past two years working with Strategic Alliance for Health in Dallas County. Due to the end of the Strategic Alliance grant, Nikki had the opportunity to transfer back to the WIC program where she is working closely with the Crossroads project. She is providing integral assistance with training and implementation in Area 7 and statewide. Area 7 will begin piloting the Crossroads system on February 24, 2014.

An abundance of weddings for the Area 7 staff have taken place over the past few months. On September 21, 2013, Tina Parker’s, daughter, Danley Glass married David Anderson at Southern House and Garden in Fosters, Alabama. Tina is a Nutrition Associate in Marengo, Choctaw and Perry Counties. Debbie Ford, ASA II, in Choctaw County celebrated the weddings of her twin daughters in recent months. Twin one, Miranda Ford, married Tyler Blakeney on October 19, 2013, in Gilbertown and on December 21, 2013, twin two, Morgan Ford, married Brian Gray in Gilbertown. Jane Neill, RD, WIC Coordinator for Hale, Marengo, Sumter and Choctaw Counties celebrated the wedding of her daughter, Sara Chandler to Philip Amthor on November 16, 2013, in Cashiers, North Carolina. Congratulations to all of these happy couples and their families.

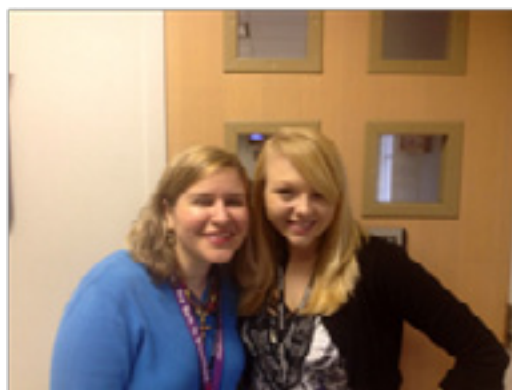
Jane Neill, RD, also preceptored two University of Alabama dietetic students during November and December 2013. The students are Holly Klotzly and Jourdann Rhodes. These students have worked in our WIC clinics and presented a nutrition talk at Golden Years Nutrition site in Moundville, Alabama.



We would like to thank Amy Nugent, Health Specialist (Peer Counselor) for her diligent work with many of our prenatal and breastfeeding mothers as Montgomery County is working to replace and build their peer counseling program. After the loss of a peer counselor at Montgomery County Health Department a few months ago, Amy volunteered to help keep the program running by taking on a larger caseload. We are very thankful for all of her hard work.

Outreach has continued in Area 8, even though we've been short-staffed. A nutritionist has been present for many of the local private school and church back-to-school programs for preschoolers in hopes of reaching parents with younger children for WIC. The nutritionist have participated by displaying WIC materials in booths at many of the local health fairs including "Celebrate Children" hosted by Montgomery County's Children's Policy Council, "Health and Wellness Event" hosted by Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, "Relay for Health and Wellness" at Mount Gillard Baptist Church, "Becoming Everyday Heroes Career and Community Day" "Annual Deputy Dave's Family and Friends Day" in Ramer, "Women's Health and Wellness Chocolate Festival" in Auburn and Central Alabama Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting. Outreach incentives and information on "My Plate", "Fruits and Veggie More Matters", and breastfeeding were available at all outreach activities. Nutritionists visited with the physicians, nurses, and interns to provide WIC information at the Baptist Family Medicine Forum in Montgomery, Alabama. Also, during breastfeeding month, the nutritionist at Montgomery County WIC wore yellow ribbons and provided goodie bags to breastfeeding moms.

Please welcome to Public Health Area 8 Jennifer Holtzscher, Interim WIC Coordinator, and Lita Amos, Nutritionist, both are new employees at the Montgomery County Health Department.

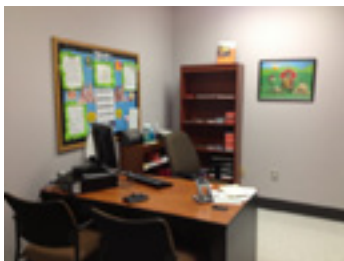


*L to R: Jennifer Holtzscher and Lita Amos*

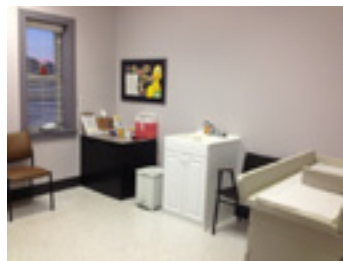


During 2013, six Public Health Area 9 employees retired following many years of dedicated service to the Alabama WIC Program. The retired employees are Shelia Burkett, RN, Susan Sims, RN, both of Butler County; Lynda Brooks, RN, Conecuh County; Nitza Matthews, NA, Baldwin County; Annette Hall, ASA II, and Paula Dubose, ASA III, both of Escambia County. These employees will be greatly missed, and we wish them the best in their respective retirements.

In May 2013 the Baldwin County Health Department WIC Program in Robertsdale, Alabama moved into the newly renovated WIC wing which was formerly the Area 9 office. The new WIC wing consists of a more spacious waiting rooms, two labs, peer counseling offices, a breastfeeding room, and individual offices for the nutritionists, clerks, and social workers.



*One of the new Offices*



*Breastfeeding Room*

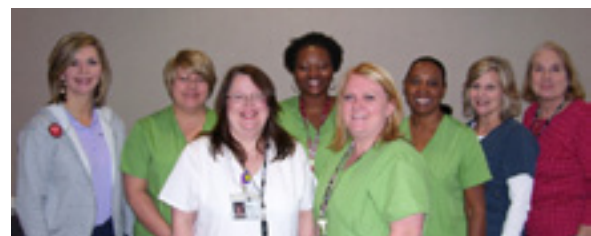


*Waiting Room*

For Fiscal Year 2013, Clarke and Conecuh Counties surpassed their WIC target caseload goals. The employees' hard work and dedication in promoting the WIC Program has truly been beneficial in helping the young families in their communities. The employees from Conecuh County are Julie Salter, Avis Whitworth, Merita Wiley, and Felecia Stallworth. The Clarke County employees are Charlotte Detlefsen, Paula Anderson, Ginger Busby, Jennifer Perryman, Kelly Boykin, Cheryl Cody, Tina Syphrit, and Cynthia Turberville.



*Conecuh County L to R: Julie Salter, Avis Whitworth, Merita Wiley, and Felecia Stallworth*



*Clarke County L to R: Charlotte Detlefsen, Paula Anderson, Ginger Busby, Jennifer Perryman, Kelly Boykin, Cheryl Cody, Tina Syphrit, and Cynthia Turberville*



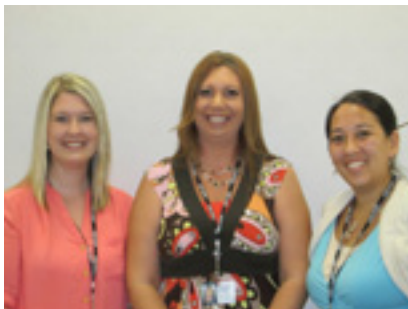


Santa's first visit to the Geneva County Health Department for 2013 was a great success. He made a scheduled second visit before the end of 2013 which proved to be very exciting for all of our WIC children.



*One of the WIC children visiting with Santa Claus.*

On August 29, 2013, the WIC staff at the Houston County Health Department held "The Party" in celebration of World Breastfeeding Month for prenatal and breastfeeding women. The mothers were encouraged to bring infants and children if desired. The Peer Counselors served snacks and gave out gift bags. There was also a drawing for a gift basket. The Houston County Peer Counselors that organized "The Party" are Katie Killingsworth, Cynthia Holderfield, and Jennifer Austin.

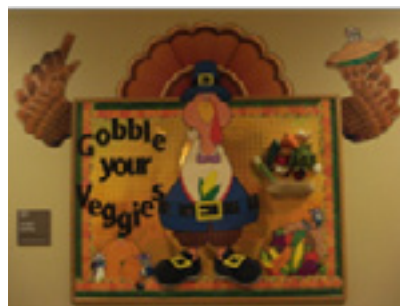


*Houston County Peer Counselors - L to R: Cynthia Holderfield, Jennifer Austin, and Katie Killingsworth*



*Houston County Peer Counselors - L to R: Katie Killingsworth Cynthia Holderfield, and Jennifer Austin*

The bulletin board, below, was done by Morgan Ellis, Registered Dietitian, for the Dale County Health Department..





Elizabeth Smith  
Nutrition Director

Congratulations to the members of the Mobile County Health Department's WIC Program who won third place in the annual pumpkin carving contest on October 31, 2013. Minette Elder, Registered Dietitian and Meridith Gardner, Nutrition Associate are pictured hard at work carving the winning APPLE!



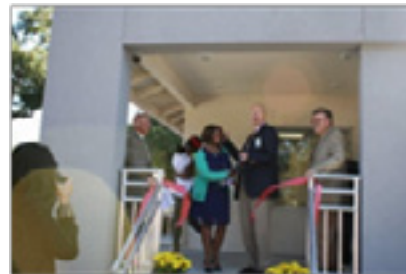
L to R: Minette Elder and Meridith Gardner and prize winning apple

Mobile County staff members had much to celebrate in September 2013 when Area Nutrition Director, Elizabeth Smith, recognized employees at two of the clinics due to their increases in caseload. They were commended because their caseloads for September 2013 far exceeded their caseloads for all of the previous years. The Teen Center recorded 2,930 participants during Fiscal Year 2013. The Semmes Clinic recorded 1,499 WIC participants during the same time period. The caseloads accumulated by these two clinics were the highest caseloads ever for those clinics. The employees were commended for their hard work in providing clinic assistance and voucher issuance at the October 2013 staff meeting. The clinic staff that was acknowledged as WIC stars included Jessica Rose, LaCrena Nicholson, Kimbe Hawthorne, Stacey Lewis, Erica Redd, Carmin Mark, and Sue Cox. Not pictured, are Janice Buchanant and Gina Clark.



L to R: Jessica Rose, LaCrena Nicholson, Kimbe Hawthorne, Stacey Lewis, Erica Redd, Carmin Mark, and Sue Cox.

The Citronelle WIC Clinic moved into a newly renovated Health Center in October 2013. The Citronelle Health Center is a family oriented Primary Health Care Clinic which is a division of the Mobile County Health Department. It is ready to receive patients after undergoing a half million dollar building refurbishment. The five hundred thousand dollars came from an Affordable Care Act Grant for Capital Development and was announced in April 2012.



Mobile County Health Department Health Officer, Dr. Bernard Eichold, Clinic Administrator, Johandra Lewis, Citronelle Mayor, J. Albert McDonald, and Pastor Marcus Hobbs.

The Nutrition Services and WIC Divisions of the Mobile County Health Department hosted a food drive on December 12, 2013. Six hundred and sixteen (616) pounds of food were collected which will help contribute to creating an estimated 473 meals for our neighbors in need.



L to R: Patricia Robinson, Elizabeth Smith, and Minette Elder



L to R: Elizabeth Smith and Minette Elder

# ALABAMA WIC NEVER STOPS WORKING!

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