

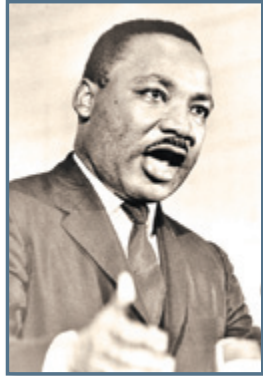


PROJECT NAF

Nurturing Asheville & Area Families

Legacies, Life, and Lessons Learned

MESSAGE FROM BELINDA K. GRANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



What Will Be Your Legacy?

Mount Zion Community Development, Inc. honors the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an American pastor, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" With that being said, Project NAF extends special thanks to Ms. Mildred Nance-Carson and staff, Legal Services Mission Health, Inc., and the Western NC Layman's League for sponsoring Project NAF's 2014 annual Christmas event. Because of your generosity and humanitarian spirit, babies and children of program participants were blessed with wonderful gifts.



Belinda K. Grant, Executive Director of Mount Zion Community Development, Inc.
Photo: Urban News

PROJECT NAF

Planning Advisory Committee Members

Charlene Galloway, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Asheville, Inc.
Cynthia Yancey, MD, Western N.C. Community Health Services
Denise Duckett, Care Partners of Western N.C.
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Royanna Williams, Business Owner, N'Tyced
Steffie Duginske, Mission Fullerton Genetics Center
ZaKiya Bell-Rogers, Buncombe County DSS

Folic acid, a B vitamin, helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord.

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January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month Ten Things You Need to Know About Birth Defects

ONE! Birth defects are common. Birth defects affect one in 33 babies every year and cause one in five infant deaths. For many babies born with a birth defect, there is no family history of the condition.

TWO! A woman should take folic acid during her teens and throughout her life. Folic acid helps a baby's brain and spine develop very early in the first month of pregnancy when a woman might not know she is pregnant.

THREE! Many birth defects are diagnosed after a baby leaves the hospital. A birth defect can affect how the body looks, how it works, or both. Some birth defects, like cleft lip or spina bifida, are easy to see. Others, like heart defects, are not.

FOUR! Some birth defects can be diagnosed before birth. Tests like an ultrasound and amniocentesis can detect birth defects before a baby is born. Prenatal care and screening are important.

FIVE! In the United States, birth defects have accounted for more than 139,000 hospital stays during a single year, resulting in \$2.5 billion in hospital costs alone. Families and the government share the burden of these costs. *Source: CDC*

SIX! The cause of most birth defects is unknown. Use of cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs, taking of some medicines; and exposure to chemicals and infectious diseases during pregnancy have been linked to birth defects.

Things You Can Do to Prevent Some Birth Defects

SEVEN! Women can take folic acid; have regular medical checkups; have tests for infectious diseases and get necessary vaccinations; and not use cigarettes, alcohol, or other drugs.

EIGHT! A pregnant woman should wash her hands often, especially after using the bathroom, touching raw meat, uncooked eggs, or unwashed vegetables, handling pets, gardening, or caring for small children.

NINE! There is no known safe amount, no



safe time, and no safe type of alcohol to drink during pregnancy. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) can include physical, behavioral, and learning problems which can last a lifetime. FASDs are 100% preventable if a woman does not drink alcohol while pregnant.

TEN! The placenta, which attaches a baby to the mother, is not a strong barrier. When a mother uses cigarettes, alcohol, or other drugs, or is exposed to infectious diseases, her baby is also exposed. Healthy habits like taking folic acid daily and eating nutritious foods can help ensure that a child is born healthy.

Source: NBDPN, Birth Defects Surveillance, Research & Prevention

Why is Folic Acid So Important?

Folic acid, a B vitamin, helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord when taken at least one month before becoming pregnant and through at least the first three months of pregnancy.

Folic acid helps a baby's neural tube, the part of the developing baby that becomes the brain and spinal cord, develop properly.

Each year in North Carolina, approximately 150 children are born with a neural tube defect. If all women consumed adequate folic acid before conception and during pregnancy, the number of babies born with a neural tube defect could drop 50 to 70 percent.

Because the most common neural tube defects occur during the first 28 days of pregnancy (usually before a woman even knows she is pregnant), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all women of childbearing age consume a multivitamin every day containing 400 micrograms of folic acid.

The national Healthy People 2020 target is to have 33 percent of females delivering a recent live birth taking multivitamins/folic acid every day in the month prior to pregnancy.

Message from Shari L. Smith



Shari L. Smith

A Healthy Pregnancy

We know that not all birth defects can be prevented. But a woman can increase her chances of having a healthy pregnancy by managing health conditions

and adopting healthy behaviors before becoming pregnant. This is important because many birth defects happen very early during pregnancy, sometimes before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

Here are some steps to get ready for a healthy pregnancy:

- Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of the B vitamin, folic acid every day before and during pregnancy.
- Don't drink alcohol at any time during pregnancy.
- Don't smoke.
- Talk to a healthcare provider about taking any medicine, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Keep health conditions like diabetes under control.
- Eat a healthy diet and work to reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- See a healthcare professional regularly.

Increasing awareness of these steps offers hope for reducing the number of birth defects in the United States. Pregnancy is an exciting time, but it also can be stressful.

Knowing that you are doing all that you can to get ready for pregnancy, staying healthy during pregnancy, and giving your baby a healthy start will help you to have peace of mind.

Source: CDC



Do you have a sister, daughter, niece, wife, girlfriend, friend, or neighbor who is pregnant? Please make a referral to the Project NAF Program. Thank you for making a difference in the life of a pregnant/post-partum woman, her baby, her children and her family!