

# Make Breastfeeding (Y)our Business.



Healthy Mothers and Children | MID-IOWA COMMUNITY ACTION | Marshalltown, Iowa | Presented By: Rachael Black, Community Partners Coordinator

## Introduction

In Marshall and Tama County we find a largely rural population, with only a few concentrated areas where services and even basic items like food can be found. The link of high rates of poverty and poor nutrition have been proved time and time again, and both our counties struggle with a high rate of poverty.

In the recent Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Iowa County Health Rankings report, Marshall and Tama counties both scored poorly in the area of overall health outcomes.

The need in our community was high and even with increased eligibility we found that family enrollment in programs like WIC had been slowly decreasing over the several months in 2016.

Taking a look closer into our communities, we found that education regarding breastmilk and the effects of that on our children's nutrition was lacking. On top of that, there were not many resources for families that showed a desire to breastfeed. This is where the need for breastfeeding education and infant nutrition along with the lack of breastfeeding resources became apparent.

## Project Overview

We created a coalition with the idea of community health in mind. We did not have an established coalition in either of our communities served, so we needed to provide buy in to our key stakeholders. This is easy, as these key players immediately saw the need for a meeting of people who can make great changes regarding the health of the community.

As the project grew stronger, we realized the need for breastfeeding education was dire. That became a bigger portion of our project than expected. We developed an initiative to encourage local organizations to learn more about why families choose to breastfeed and how to support them in many areas of the community. We developed a "Breastfeeding Friendly" training packet and included resources on who to support families who choose to breastfeed.

We wanted to reach as many people in our community as possible with information regarding breastfeeding education and support. provided education and resources to be placed where all staff can see to increase the amount of people exposed to breastfeeding education. Along with this training, they received a designation of a "breastfeeding friendly environment". This included clings to be hung in any area where the public could see. We also provided a map on our website which lists out all of the certified business. This created free advertising and a push to support our communities.

**What is the Breastfeeding Friendly Initiative?**

The Breastfeeding Friendly Initiative is a way for your business to show that you are a safe, supportive environment for breastfeeding women.

**Why does this matter?**

Unfortunately, breastfeeding moms sometimes struggle to find a good place to breastfeed when they are shopping or participating in activities.

When a community is welcoming to breastfeeding mothers, everyone may not be able to find a good place to breastfeed in the area. If you believe you are creating a healthier community.

**Who else is participating?**

The Breastfeeding Friendly Initiative is the result of several different community partners including HCA, WIC, Community Health Partners, and Marshalltown Community College. Breastfeeding has already been a part of the community and you can find a complete and current list on our website.

**About CPHAC:**

The Community Partnerships for Healthy Mothers and Children Coalition (CPHAC) is to collaborate with our community to create a healthier life for families through education and outreach.

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**Make Breastfeeding Your Business.**

**Did you know?**

Breastfeeding is protected under the Iowa Code § 13C.30A. A woman may breastfeed her own child in any public place where her presence is otherwise permitted. Business may not discriminate against a woman who is breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding has been associated with better outcomes for both mom and baby. If every child was breastfed within an hour of birth, given only breast milk for their first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding up to the age of two years, almost 600,000 children's lives would be saved every year, according to the World Health Organization. Globally, less than 40% of infants under six months of age are exclusively breastfed.

## Activities

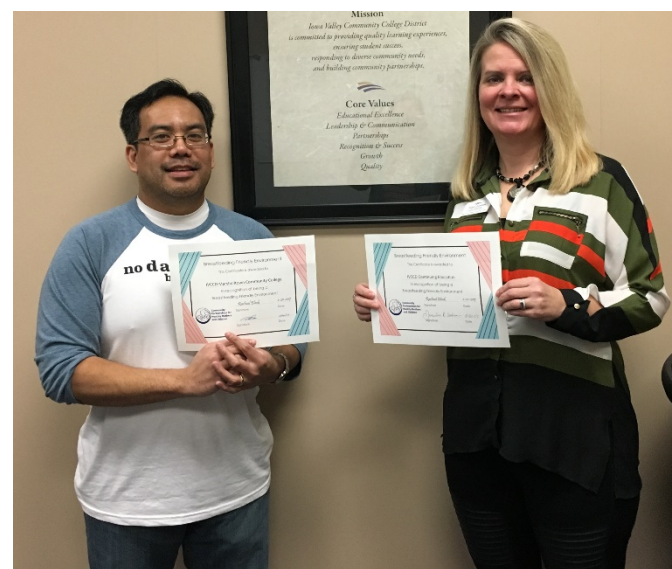
- ✓ Develop and implement "Breastfeeding Friendly Environment" Training packet
- ✓ Develop online map with pins for our designated BFF environments
- ✓ Provide technical assistance to our local hospital by organizing staff meetings with Certified Lactation Consultants, discussing lack of organized breastfeeding policies
- ✓ Collect donations for new diaper bags with no infant formula inside
- ✓ Promote businesses and organizations who support breastfeeding in our community
- ✓ Organize and implement a breastfeeding education training for healthcare professionals in our community. This training was developed by the Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition and taught by two IBCLC's (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant)
- ✓ Design and implement an organized WIC benefits and services training
- ✓ Develop and implement a universal referral system



These are pictures of our map where we pinpoint all of the BFF environments. Families can now decide to support places that support them.



The cling developed for the businesses designated as BFF



Two of our community college's staff. These two represent our Main college and the Continuing Education Department. These two have also been the leads on creating a space for a lactation suite. They have a temporary one up now and are getting the support of the rest of their team to create a permanent space for moms and families.

## Next Steps

Sustain and expand collaboration efforts to other counties that MICA serves. The breastfeeding friendly trainings will continue along with the WIC services and benefits training.

As new ownership takes place within our local hospital, we will work together to increase breastfeeding education at the prenatal level. When the hospital is financially stable, we will work with the Women's Care Floor to increase breastfeeding rates as the time of discharge. WIC will then continue to encourage and provide resources to families in their care who've continued their breastfeeding plan.

## Best Practices

Learn about the other resources your clients use and determine if they have similar goals as your group. We learned that many resources around us wanted similar things, and working together made reaching our goals much simpler.

## Outcomes

- We established community partners to sustain and facilitate WIC and breastfeeding friendly trainings.
- We have certified over **15** organizations as breastfeeding friendly. One of these organizations is our local community college, which covers several off campus locations and two colleges in connection with MCC.
- Marshalltown Community College also created a lactation suite. Included in this suite are curtains for privacy, a comfortable chair, reading material, electrical outlets and a sign up sheet. In the future, they will be creating a stronger policy regarding the use of this room and are looking into a way to get a refrigerator system and a hospital grade pump so mama's have one less thing to carry.
- We will be training over **30** healthcare professionals from our area in breastfeeding. This will create an even playing field when new moms are asking their healthcare provider about breastfeeding.
- We implemented a universal referral form in **4** organizations including the college. We have given WIC training to over **7** businesses and organizations including our OB/GYN office and primary health care office.
- We helped the hospital stop giving out "just in case" formula to breastfeeding moms. Now moms get a folder full of local breastfeeding resources.
- We have provided over **100** breastfeeding and skin to skin education posters to hospitals, clinics, WIC offices, and a college. This has reinforced the fact that education starts prenatally and these posters provide correct and interesting information.
- We connected our local refugee groups with a breastfeeding resource-our WIC peer counselors. They will be providing quarterly breastfeeding sessions to the Burmese refugees in their languages.
- We've been recognized in two different local newspapers at least **4** times for our efforts in educating the public on breastfeeding and increasing breastfeeding rates.



Some of the diaper bags the hospital is now using. The hats were made and donated by a woman from the community.



Our booth at a community fair. Pictured next to us is a "Nursing Nook" that WIC Peer Counselors bring to all community events. Gives mom a place to rest with baby and feed. Has chairs, escape from the heat, and play pens for baby.



Some of the handouts placed in clinics, hospitals and other organizations to give moms a chance to collect their own information about breastfeeding. WIC also donated "Why should I nurse my baby" books for all the healthcare clinics in town so that moms can take them as they want and hopefully learn more about nursing their babe.

## Lessons Learned

Sometimes, as much as you want to control the situation, you just can't. Leave those situations to work out on their own know that if it should happen, it will.

Change doesn't happen overnight. Give yourself a period of time to provide buy in and meet resistance in regards to changing a large policy.

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