

Your Health Matters

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

Did you know that one in five children in America struggle with hunger? This is personal to me.

I want to share my story with you regarding hunger in my family. As a little girl, my Dad would share stories with me about the Depression. They were homeless. He would tell me how he and my uncle would beg for food on the streets to try and feed the family of 7 kids. Even now, when my Dad and I sit together in the early morning hours sharing a cup of coffee, he cries thinking about his childhood. He is so appreciative to all the charitable organizations and individuals who helped our family during this difficult time.

From my own family experience, I have a strong commitment and compassion to never abandon a patient or a family who needs us. We are here to serve this community. Through the Women, Infants and Children program, also called WIC, women and young children in Montgomery County receive compassionate, high quality nutrition services.

Our caring Health Department staff provides nutrition information and breastfeeding support to women to empower them to make healthy food decisions for themselves and their children. The WIC program also provides families with vouchers to purchase healthy foods like whole grain bread, cereal, peanut butter, cheese, milk and fresh fruits and vegetables.

WIC Coordinator, Julie Brandenburg manages the Montgomery County Health Department's WIC program. Julie serves on the front lines of WIC – scheduling appointments, issuing vouchers and sometimes certifying participants. She is also doing the background work that makes WIC all possible – ordering supplies and crunching numbers. Julie cares about the children she serves. She wants the very best outcome for every one of them.

This is evident with the results of our recent audit by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, affirming our program's excellence and Julie's leadership skills. "I just wanted to send you a note to tell you what an outstanding job you've done as a WIC Coordinator," said WIC program auditor Debbie McClurg-Hitt. "I know you really care about your job and the participants you serve. It is reflected in how well the rest of the WIC staff performs."

The results of our WIC audit were outstanding. On a scale of 1 to 10, I was told our WIC program rates an 11 in the state of Missouri. I am so very proud of Julie.

The WIC program is open to Missouri residents with a gross income that meets guidelines. Program benefits are provided to women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or whose pregnancy recently ended. Infants less than 12 months old and children under 5 years old who have a need for improved nutrition as determined by nutrition professionals are also eligible for the program. An unborn child is counted as



a member of the family when eligibility is determined. For complete income eligibility information, visit www.montgomerycountyhealth.org or call 573-564-2495.

Nutrition is vital for a child's development. The WIC program can't meet all the food needs of an entire family, but it offers many resources to help mothers ensure their children are eating healthy foods every day.

One of our WIC moms, Brittany Mahaney says, "I would definitely recommend it to anybody, because it is that great. I do like WIC!"

WIC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Services are provided on a non-discriminatory basis. Standards for participation in the WIC program are the same for everyone, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap.

The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. To learn more, call 573-564-2495 or visit us online at: www.montgomerycountyhealth.org or on Facebook or Twitter @healthymoco. ■

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Harman".

1.19.16