



## Minneapolis Healthy Start: Community Action Network (CAN) Updates

### Healthy Start Participant Spotlight: Tanisha Williams



The Healthy Start (HS) program currently serves 381 pregnant and/or parenting women in Minneapolis. The program relies on contracted partners to provide direct prenatal and postpartum

services to participants. The Family Partnership (TFP), one of HS contracted partners, conducts monthly advisory meetings with HS participants. Ms. Tanisha Williams is an active participant at these meetings. Ms. Williams has been with TFP since April of 2013. She was born in Louisiana but lived in Seattle, Washington for most of her life. Five years ago, Ms. Williams moved to Minnesota with her partner and children. She fell in love with Minneapolis when she arrived and plans to make Minneapolis a home for her family. Ms. Williams has four boys ages 18, 11, 4, and 18 months. Her oldest son lives with her family in Seattle, Washington.

Ms. Williams was referred to TFP by her parenting case worker at a shelter. Since joining the program, she attends parenting classes led by the TFP case managers every Thursday. In these classes, participants learn about safe

sleep, how to discipline kids, and how to stay safe and healthy during and after pregnancy. Joining these classes was not an easy decision for Ms. Williams. She was initially afraid of sharing her personal information with women that she barely knew in the program. However, she decided to reach out because she wanted to make healthier choices for her new baby and for herself despite living in a city where she didn't know anyone.

Although she was hesitant to commit herself at the beginning, it slowly became easier for her. Having a case manager and a therapist that she sees regularly is helpful for her. Ms. Williams looks forward to having meaningful conversations with other parents and pregnant women in the program. The classes definitely informed her parenting skills. During the four years that Tanisha has been with the program, her life has changed dramatically. She received support from her case managers and the women in the program as she deals with mental health issues and navigating in the new city. The most important thing that Ms. Williams values about being with TFP is the mutual trust she shares with her peers and the support she receives from her case managers.

## **New Public Service Announcements Highlight Early Learning and Healthy Parenting**

Sameerah Bilal-Roby, chair of the Minneapolis Healthy Start Community Action Network and director of the African American Babies Coalition (AABC), has been very busy recently. In June 2016, she co-hosted a very successful conference on Healing in the African American Community. She also created an exciting opportunity to spread the word about ways to support early learning and healthy parenting.

AABC recently partnered with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) to produce a set of public service announcements (PSAs). The messages behind the PSAs came out of interviews with African American community members. The same messages were first used on a set of posters which became very popular and caught the eye of TPT producers. They were so interested in getting the word out that TPT raised the money to produce the new PSAs through a family foundation.

The PSAs carry the message that parenting is both challenging and rewarding. Stress that parents are under can cause trauma for children. There are ways to address the stressors of parenting and to create positive learning experiences. The intention for the PSAs is to have them viewed by parents in clinics, hospitals and child care centers as well as during teen parenting groups. They will also be used by AABC conversation hosts to expand the dialogue on parenting in the African American community.

Congratulations to Sameerah and AABC on their partnership with Twin Cities Public Television!

## **CAN Action Teams Update**

### **Housing**

The Housing Action Team is planning two trainings. The first training tentatively scheduled for September is geared towards case managers and public health nurses. They will learn how to develop relationships with landlords and gain resources from housing experts around Minneapolis to help clients who are in a housing crisis and about to lose their home. The second training (date TBD) will be specific to Healthy Start clients with peer-led dialogues on housing navigation. Healthy Start participants will have an opportunity to learn from each other and housing experts on housing issues around Minneapolis. During the event, there will be giveaways, food, and daycare will be provided.

### **Safe Sleep**

Three safe sleep community baby showers were held this spring in different communities in Minneapolis. The community response was overwhelmingly positive. Many thanks to The Family Partnership, NorthPoint Health & Wellness, United Tribes of Little Earth, and Shiloh Temple for hosting the baby showers. The Healthy Start program is in discussions with Children's Hospital to support more safe sleep baby showers for pregnant women from the American Indian community.

### **Fatherhood and Employment**

The Fatherhood and Employment Action Team is planning a Back to School and Ready to Learn event on August 27<sup>th</sup>. This event

will happen in a park where there will be different activity stations so fathers and their children can participate. This action team hopes to host about 50 dads and 100-150 attendees.

### **Mental Health**

The Mental Health Action Team plans to have a follow-up meeting from the March training on trauma informed care by the Sanctuary Model. This meeting will include a conversation on the application of trauma informed care within the agencies that attended the training in March. The action team is also discussing a mobile daycare idea for clients who have a mental health appointment and have children ages one or older.

### **Dates and Events**

- The next CAN meeting is **August 16<sup>th</sup>** at North Regional Library
- A fatherhood event for dads of young children ages 0-4 will be held on **August 27th**
- A housing training for case managers and public health nurses will be held in **September 2016**
- Visit our website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/health/youth/healthystart/index.htm>