



Maternal, Child and Family Health Coalition

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Maternal Child and Family Health Coalition Honors Champions for Moms and Babies

ST. LOUIS (September 2015) – The Maternal Child and Family Health Coalition (MCHFC) is pleased to announce the honorees for the 2015 Standing Up for Mothers and Babies Awards Dinner to be held on October 8, 2015. Started as a celebration of the MCFHC's 10th Anniversary in 2009, this event has become a call to action for continued investment in improving the health of babies, families and communities. The dinner is an opportunity to celebrate outstanding leaders and organizations dedicated to mothers and babies through the years. It serves as a reminder of the effectiveness of leveraging individual efforts with collective collaboration. While many leaders and organizations have done so much for maternal and child health, the community must come together as a whole to solve the complex problem of why too many babies die in St. Louis before their first birthday, and the disproportionate burden of infant mortality on communities of color.

“The health and health care of women before, during and following pregnancy is the largest contributor to why babies are born too soon, too small, and why too many die,” said Kendra Copanas, Executive Director, “The MCFHC works to improve the health of women, children and families which is one of the most important investments a community can make.”

This year, the MCFHC will present the Standing Up for Mothers and Babies Awards to four local leaders.

Deborah Kiel is an Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Nursing Programs, and Director of the Undergraduate Public Health program at Lindenwood University. Dr. Kiel's practice and academic expertise includes health policy development, public health administration and maternal and child health. Her research focuses on reducing our community's high rates of infant mortality by improving the health of women before, during and after pregnancy. Her current work examines how women's individual health behaviors, environmental factors, health delivery systems and health policy interact to influence birth outcomes.

Lavinia Lewis, an Associate Research Fellow at Pfizer Inc., works as a team leader on several projects -- from discovery to development to first in human studies. During her 14 years at Pfizer she has led the drug product development of several biologics across all stages of development; including two vaccines that were designated as 'break through therapy' by the FDA. She was the drug product team lead for the recently approved vaccine against Group B

Meningococcal Disease, Trumenba®; where she was responsible for overseeing the formulation, processing and commercial manufacture of the vaccine. Both Dr. Kiel and Dr. Lewis will receive The Dr. Terry Leet Researcher Award for their demonstrated commitment to and passion for helping to provide a better, safer future for mothers and babies. The award is named in memory of Terry Leet, PhD, MPH who was widely recognized locally and nationally as a scientist, teacher and humanitarian.

After **Stephanie Williamson** left the corporate world and became a foster parent to a little boy, she found a new way to realize her passion of helping others. She started a nonprofit in August of 2011, “Helping Hand-Me Downs”, intending to fill in current agency gaps and was located in her own living room with only 12 partner agencies. Now, HHMD is a thriving nonprofit organization with over 100 referring partner agencies and its own warehouse. The service model has experienced 50% growth year over year and is on track to serve over 2,500 children and their families in 2015 with a target of 4,000 for 2016. She will be honored with the Alderman Gregory Carter Community Champion Award, named in memory of Alderman Gregory Carter who served the 27th Ward for nearly 20 years and was a champion for healthy families.

Dr. Matthew Broom is the Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Saint Louis University School of Medicine and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics. He is the Medical Director of Danis Pediatric Center and leads the Happy Mothers, Healthy Families maternal wellness program at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital. His medical practice is committed to serving the underserved and improving the overall access to care for patients and families across the St. Louis area. His research interests include utilizing mobile technology, namely text messaging, to improve patient engagement via chronic disease management, perinatal depression screening, medical education, and better health care communication. Dr. Broom will be honored with the Dr. Corinne Walentik Practitioner Award for his dedication to improving the health and well-being of the entire family. This award is named in memory of Dr. Walentik who was widely recognized as a passionate advocate for babies and families, particularly for those with little voice, few resources and unequal access.

Sponsors of the event include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital and St. Mary’s Hospital, BJC HealthCare and St. Louis Children’s Hospital, Aetna Better Health of Missouri, Home State Health, Missouri Foundation for Health, MissouriCare, Pfizer Inc, Reliance Bank, St. Luke’s Hospital and Emerging Wisdom, LLC.

To purchase tickets for the Standing Up for Mothers and Babies Awards Dinner and learn more about the MCFHC, visit www.stl-mcfhc.org or call 314-289-5680.

About Maternal Child and Family Health Coalition

The MCFHC is the leading convener of stakeholders that take action around priority health issues for women and children. The mission of the MCFHC is to improve birth outcomes, promote healthy families and build healthy communities by uniting and mobilizing the St. Louis Region. As a result of the MCFHC, the St. Louis Region has received over \$8 million in federal funds to expand home-based serves that improve the health of pregnant women and new families in vulnerable communities. For more information about the MCFHC, call 314-289-5680 or visit www.stl-mcfhc.org.