

BFREE Newsletter

Breastfeeding Resiliency, Engagement, and Empowerment

"Empowering parents to breastfeed every step of the way"

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Letter from the Editor

Dear BFREE Coalition & Community Members,

Happy spring from the BFREE Team! We hope you and your families are continuing to stay happy and safe as the weather gets warmer. We are especially pleased to present the April issue of our newsletter.

We are highlighting the breastfeeding experiences of young mothers/parents, who face added barriers in finding breastfeeding support. We are grateful to all of the parents and organization advocates who shared their stories and experiences with these parents.

First we announce the new grant awarded to the BFREE Team by NY State Department of Health. Next we spotlight Sun River Health Riverhead for achieving NYS breastfeeding friendly practice designation. We also highlight efforts to connect with our Spanish-Speaking communities in our region.

We then transition to our newsletter's theme on young moms and breastfeeding. We highlight the presentations our Team gave to young and teen moms on breastfeeding at Hempstead High School and at MOMMAS House in Glen Cove. We also include an interview with the executive director of MOMMAS. In addition, we share an interview with Monique De Four Jones, MD, MBA, MS, which details the barriers to breastfeeding among teen parents (ages 13-19) and steps that can be taken to address these challenges. We are also excited to share a Parent's Perspective, having spoken with a new young mom about her joys and challenges of raising and breastfeeding a child.

As always, we are sincerely appreciative to all of this edition's contributors, to the entire BFREE Steering Committee for its active engagement and sage advice, and to each of you, our many collaborators, for your collective passion in support of breastfeeding. Please email us at BFREE@northwell.edu to share feedback and any potential contribution ideas for future newsletters!

Sincerely,



Henry Bernstein, DO, MHCM, FAAP
Principal Investigator
Creating Breastfeeding Friendly Communities



*The BFREE Team understands that the language around breastfeeding can be very gendered and risks alienating marginalized populations. While we are encouraging more inclusive language, such as “parents” over “mothers”, “partners” over “fathers”, and “human milk” over “breast milk”, we also wanted to stay true to the voices that generously contributed to this newsletter. We hope to continue educating ourselves and expand the inclusivity of our work to promote healthy infant feeding for all parents.

Exciting New Grant for our BFREE team!

Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding, and Lactation Friendly New York (BFF-NY)

BFREE is excited to announce that Long Island Jewish Medical Center has been selected for the Breastfeeding, Chestfeeding, and Lactation Friendly New York Grant, in effect from July 1, 2023 until June 30, 2028.

Under this grant, we will be working in two communities in Nassau County: Glen Cove and Hempstead and four communities in Suffolk County: Babylon, Islip, Southampton, and Shinnecock Nation. Our goals are to: (1) promote evidence-based lactation education/management, (2) support parents in meeting their breastfeeding/chestfeeding goals, (3) establish policy and community support for breastfeeding/chestfeeding, and (4) increase breastfeeding/chestfeeding initiation, exclusivity, and duration within the selected communities. For more information about the grant, please see the press release:

https://health.ny.gov/press/releases/2023/2023-04-21_breast-chest_feeding.htm

If you know a site in one of these communities that would like to become breastfeeding friendly, please fill out the following Google Form below:



<https://forms.gle/7F362wXm1PKEFeg49>



**Department
of Health**

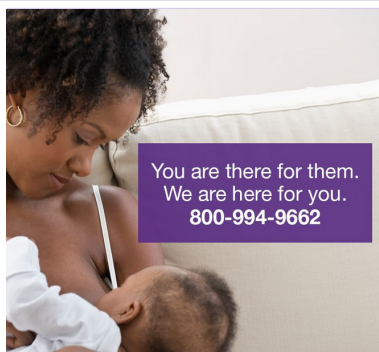


Success Spotlight

The BFREE Team is happy to celebrate **Sun River Health Riverhead** in Southampton for achieving NYS Breastfeeding Friendly designation! In particular, we would like to thank their site champion, Nakeea Toussaint, for putting in a great amount of effort to support her employees/members of the community and their breastfeeding journey.



Pictured are members at Sun River Health Riverhead: Nakeea Toussaint - site champion and Nurse Manager, and Laura Gallo, Senior Patient Representative, along with members of our BFFREE Team.



Office on Women's Health
National Breastfeeding
Helpline: 1-800-994-
9662

Call anytime M-F 9am-
6pm to talk with a health
information specialist in
English or Spanish

This work is supported by a NYSDOH "Creating Breastfeeding Friendly Communities" grant, which aims to expand community-based breastfeeding partnerships and reduce disparities in the rates of breastfeeding across New York State. Congratulations to all for being recognized for your hard work, and we thank you so much for collaborating with our team!



Connecting With Our Spanish-Speaking Community

The BFREE Team remains grateful to Yezenia Chaparro (CBC), Paola Duarte (CLC), Sandy McCabe (IBCLC), and Marta Blanco (CLC), Italia Granshaw (CLC), as well as Lizeth Villa for their excellent translation services in our ongoing Spanish Baby Cafés to promote services that are culturally and linguistically competent services. We would also like to thank our Subcommittee for Spanish-Speaking Communities for recommending this valuable initiative and working tirelessly to advocate for the community!

In addition, we continue to partner with the radio station La Fiesta 98.5. We have two upcoming programs planned: returning to work while breastfeeding and detailing the new legislation in NY regarding breastfeeding accommodations in the workplace. Stay tuned for the interview live on air and on our Facebook page!

Excitedly, we have also connected with two Spanish-speaking child day cares in Islip, Dios con Nosotros and Luna Daycare LLC, to help them achieve NYS Day Care Home breastfeeding friendly designation.

This work is supported by our current NYSDOH “Creating Breastfeeding Friendly Communities” grant, which aims to expand community-based breastfeeding partnerships and reduce disparities in the rates of breastfeeding across New York State.

Check out our website for more resources: <https://www.bfreecoalition.org>

Visit us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/BFREE.Coalition/>

Visit us on Instagram at: <https://www.instagram.com/bfree.team/>

This project is supported by NYSDOH Grant #530390. The content of this newsletter is the responsibility of the Contractor and does not necessarily represent the opinions and interpretations or policy of the New York State Department of Health.



Young Moms and Breastfeeding

Although the rate of teen pregnancy has been dropping over the past few years, there are still many young moms who give birth every year.¹ For instance in NY in 2016, there were 7,959 woman aged 15-19 who gave birth.² Yet, as seen in the table, teen and young moms are less likely to ever breastfeed their child than woman over 30 years of age.

Breastfeeding offers many benefits to moms and babies, and thus supporting young moms who choose to breastfeed is imperative. There are likely many challenges young moms face when breastfeeding - whether that be the stigma associated both with pregnancy and breastfeeding, the need to balance breastfeeding the child and school/work, or lack of resources or education regarding breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding Disparities by Age (U.S.)

Age of Mothers	% Ever Breastfeeding
15-18	42.5% ³
19-21	57.5% ³
20-29	79.9% ⁴
30+	84.9% ⁴

To Learn more About Young Moms and Breastfeeding

Please View this Webinar:

[Young Parents and the Importance of Breastfeeding](#)

The Michigan Breastfeeding Network released a Great Lakes Breastfeeding Webinar titled "Young Parents and the Importance of Breastfeeding." The webinar features a discussion on the inequities young parents in marginalized communities face due to a lack of social support systems, resources, and knowledge around birthing, parenting, and breastfeeding. The discussion is designed to equip birth workers with the knowledge to adequately empower young parents with breastfeeding support. Continuing education for viewing this webinar is available through March 19, 2024.

1. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/02/why-is-the-teen-birth-rate-falling/>

2. https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital_statistics/2016/table30.htm

3. Sipsma, H. L., Magriples, U., Divney, A., Gordon, D., Gabzdyl, E., & Kershaw, T. (2013). Breastfeeding behavior among adolescents: initiation, duration, and exclusivity. *Journal of adolescent health, 53*(3), 394-400.

4. [https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html#:~:text=Breastfeeding%20Disparities%20Exist.&text=Younger%20mothers%20aged%20to%20years%20or%20older%20\(84.9%25\).](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html#:~:text=Breastfeeding%20Disparities%20Exist.&text=Younger%20mothers%20aged%20to%20years%20or%20older%20(84.9%25).)

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Connecting with Young Moms

Our Team recently presented all about nutrition for pregnant teens/teen mothers at Hempstead High School as well as with young moms at MOMMAS House in Glen Cove. These events were led by our two project coordinators, who are CLCs and Registered Dietitians, Pamela Reichert Anderson and Anastasia Schepers. In addition to offering information about the benefits of breast milk, the BFREE team created an activity called "Keep or Toss", where they discussed what moms should keep consuming (healthy foods, pre-natal vitamins, water, etc.) or not consume (cigarettes, White Claws, cold cuts, etc.) during pregnancy.

At Hempstead, a teen mother who had recently had a child while in high school shared her experience and reasons why she chose to breastfeed. Under the new New York State DOH grant, Hempstead is now one of the new communities with our new grant. We were thrilled to have the opportunity to start connecting with pregnant/postpartum mothers to help spread information about the benefits of breastfeeding in the community



These are photos from our presentation at MOMMAS House. The left features team members with a young mom. The right features team members prepping for the presentation.

For additional resources on Nutrition for Pregnant Young Mothers please visit:

Nutrition for Pregnant Teens:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15r4f_Y_2XzwKkZ8N8-72O11WWYqQHNGN/view?usp=sharing

Encouraging Teen Moms to Breastfeed:

<https://kellymom.com/pregnancy/bf-prep/teenbf/>

There are many things to consider as you plan for baby's arrival.
Hay muchas cosas que hay que tener en cuenta a la hora de planificar la llegada del bebé.



Have you thought about how to feed your baby?
¿Ha pensado en cómo alimentar a su bebé?

Spotlight on MOMMAS House



Read our spotlight on MOMMAS House, a transitional housing mother-child program promoting healthy birth outcomes and empowering young mothers. Featuring an interview with Executive Director, Deirdre Trumpy.

What is MOMMAS House’s mission and how does it support young parents?

Deirdre: The mission of MOMMAS House is to provide housing and support services to homeless young mothers and their babies/children. Our program has been developed over the years to specifically focus on the unique needs of pregnant and parenting youth mothers. This population of mothers is often experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.

What services do you have to support young pregnant moms? Or those with children?

Deirdre: Our primary service is housing. We operate three residences in Nassau County housing young mothers and their children who are experiencing homelessness. Our goal is to provide safe and stable housing for these young families to find refuge during a difficult time in their lives. A place where they can formulate and work on goals to improve their lives and future prospects.

Support services are pretty much everything they could possibly need. We provide material assistance for basic needs for mom and baby. We collect and distribute a lot of baby supplies - diapers, wipes, clothing, toiletries, equipment, furniture - everything you can think of that a baby needs we collect and give to our moms. We will also throw a baby shower for any mom who comes to us while pregnant or having recently delivered.
(...continued on next page)



Spotlight on MOMMAS House (continued)

(...) And we will provide ongoing assistance throughout the family's stay and frequently after they no longer live at MOMMAS house as well. We provide case management services to ensure the family is being connected to any and all benefits and resources that can support them in their current situation and future goals - such as connecting them to health insurance, medical care, mental health care, education and vocational training programs, financial assistance, housing programs and more. Within our program we have outside agencies come in to provide workshops on life skills - such as financial management, parenting skills and child development, nutrition and cooking, time management, stress management, fitness, job readiness, and more.

How do you support the moms who want to breastfeed or who are breastfeeding?

Deirdre: All moms are encouraged to try breastfeeding. We will make sure they have the supplies they need - such as storage bags, support pillow, a pump. We have an ongoing relationship with Northwell where we refer expectant and new mothers to their Breastfeeding Class and Breastfeeding support groups. If needed, we will also connect them with a Lactation Specialist.

What percentage of your moms breastfeed?

Deirdre: Not all of our mothers come to us pregnant or with newborns, many have already given birth and may have a toddler aged child when they come to us. We have observed a small number of mothers breastfeed beyond the first few weeks, probably around 20%. Many of the moms will express an intent to try breastfeeding but we have observed many switch to formula soon after birth.

What are the barriers the moms you serve experience in choosing to breastfeed?

Deirdre: I think the greatest challenge is that these are single mothers without a partner to share the heavy load of newborn care. Although our staff offers the new moms hands-on support, especially during the newborn stage, moms will naturally feel the responsibility to care for their baby 24/7 and will not rely on staff as much as they may have relied on help from a parent partner if they lived with one, and that can be overwhelming. (...continued on next page)

Spotlight on MOMMAS House (continued)

I have found many just get too tired to continue the breastfeeding process, especially if there are challenges getting started - like sore nipples, difficulty latching. They find it easier and quicker to feed with the bottle. I also think breastfeeding can present doubts and concerns for the mom, about how much the baby is eating and if they are getting enough milk. For a young mother who may lack confidence, this can be an added stress they wish to eliminate. I see often that the inexperienced mother's idea of a well fed baby is one with a full stomach, that sleepy equals content, and that chunky babies gaining a lot of weight equals healthy. These are feeding misconceptions we often have to try to correct.

What services would be helpful to help increase the number of moms who breastfeed?

Deirdre: To list some key resources:

- Education: information and ongoing encouragement are probably the most helpful.
- Setting expectations, like having mothers share common experiences with Breastfeeding
- Confidence building around motherhood.
- Making moms feel more empowered by reminding them that they have the ability to provide everything the baby needs.
- Teaching mothers how to tell if the baby is getting enough milk as well as other Tips and tricks for achieving the best feeding outcomes. For example, what to do when issues arise.
- Assistive devices are key, for example, comfortable supports such as chairs, support pillows, nipple care supplies.
- We also need more nipple care products, breastfeeding friendly clothing, hands-free pumping bras and nursing covers.

MOMMAS house is privately funded and supported by the generous donations of organizations and individuals as well as the work of its volunteers. To support MOMMAS House follow the link to donate or see other ways to help: <https://www.mommashouse.org/ways-to-give>

Words by Deirdre Trumpy. Edited by BFREE team member, Maria Fernanda Machicao.



Interview with Dr. Monique De Four Jones

Members of the BFREE Team had the pleasure of interviewing Monique De Four Jones, MD, MBA, MS, an Associate Professor at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine and the Associate Chief of Labor and Delivery at Northwell-LIJ. We discussed barriers to breastfeeding unique among teen parents (ages 13-19) and steps that can be taken to address these challenges.

According to data released by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in 2012, only 59.7% of mothers younger than 20 years old initiated breastfeeding, compared with 79.3% of mothers older than 30 years that initiated breastfeeding.¹ Dr. De Four Jones indicated that this disparity can be accounted for by multiple barriers:

1 Lack of Knowledge

Teen mothers are typically progressing toward their middle or high school graduation when they find out they are pregnant. As a result, the facts, information, and skills about breastfeeding and its benefits are limited as compared to older mothers. Thus, teen mothers might opt for what they believe is easiest -- formula feeding.

2 Incomplete Breast Development

Incomplete breast development can impact a mother's ability to breastfeed. Breast development is an ongoing process that occurs throughout puberty, which begins at an average of 8-13 years of age. Dr. De Four Jones explained that breast tissue and milk production glands continue to grow over time. The average age for full breast development is age 17. If breasts are not fully developed, a mother might not be able to produce enough breast milk. However, younger teen mothers without fully developed breasts might encounter trouble with breastfeeding.

3 Returning To School

Often, teens return to school after giving birth, but the school's environment might not be conducive to breastfeeding or even breast pumping. Even if the mother initiates breastfeeding prior to returning to school, the duration of breastfeeding will likely be reduced due to the lack of resources such as portable breast pumps and privacy location.

4 Social Stigma of Teen Pregnancy

As teen pregnancy is not a social norm in the US, teens might feel scared to tell others about their pregnancy. As a result, pregnant teens may not make an OB appointment, which results in complications with the pregnancy and also not receiving the necessary prenatal and breastfeeding education.

Interview with Dr. Monique De Four Jones (continued)

While there are many barriers that account for the low rates of breastfeeding seen in teen parents, Dr. De Four Jones emphasized that education is the key to promoting breastfeeding in this population, as “everything starts with early education.”

Dr. De Four Jones suggested that education begin as early as middle school, when students most often are entering their teenage years. Education at this level should start by promoting methods to prevent pregnancy and thoroughly engaging students to ensure they understand these preventative measures. While education should primarily focus on contraception, students should also learn about the signs of pregnancy and resources they can refer to if they do get pregnant. Education about contraception and pregnancy should not be limited to the classroom. Ideally, it should expand to community settings where teens feel comfortable; this includes community health centers, houses of worship, and pediatric offices. When these sites encourage teens to seek prenatal care, teens can also learn about the benefits of breastfeeding and how best to care for their new baby. Furthermore, teen mothers who may not have fully developed breasts can explore other options to supply their infant with breast milk if they so choose, like using a breast milk center.

As Dr. De Four Jones remarks, “To be supportive is to be inclusive. A teen should not be excluded because she is a teen.” It is crucial that we take these extra steps to support teen moms to have access to prenatal care and to learn how best to care for their new baby.

The BFREE Team is very grateful to Dr. De Four Jones for speaking with our team about teen moms and breastfeeding.

References:

(1)<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/129/3/e827/31785/Breastfeeding-and-the-Use-of-Human-Milk?autologincheck=redirected>

A Young Mom's Perspective

Our team had the opportunity to speak with a young mother to hear her firsthand perspective on the joys and challenges of raising and breastfeeding a child. Her story provides insight into the experiences that many young mothers face. We would like to thank Dr. De Four Jones for graciously connecting us with her patient.

As per the mother's request to remain anonymous, we will refer to her as Jane.

As a new and first-time mother, having just given birth only a couple days prior to meeting with us, Jane has found herself navigating new challenges. From establishing sleep schedules to breastfeeding, everything is a new experience. To prepare prior to the birth of her child, Jane set a goal for herself and her breastfeeding journey: to have enough milk supply for her baby. Like many mothers, she was worried about not producing enough milk. This is a common worry for new mothers, describing to us how she fears “not seeing enough supply and just giving up”. Her first experience breastfeeding was challenging, as she experienced pain, but she felt a sense of pride knowing that she was providing her child with the best possible milk. Despite these challenges, Jane encourages new mothers to

“Never give up, no matter how hard it gets”

Having a support system can be crucial for new mothers. With that said, as she reflects on her experience, Jane believes that the best support system is having somebody next to you, making sure you are doing the right things.

In addition to social support, resources can also provide informational support and guidance to new, young mothers. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) emphasizes that families should receive non judgmental support information, and guidance in feeding their infants (1). This means that parents should have access to resources that provide helpful insights and practical advice on how to nourish their child. Reflecting on what resources might be helpful for new mothers,

Jane wishes she heard more stories from other young moms about their experiences.

These stories may provide a valuable source of knowledge and comfort for young mothers, like Jane.

Like many new mothers, Jane was attending work/school prior to her pregnancy. She plans to return to work/school in the future, and continue breastfeeding.

We sincerely thank Jane for taking the time to speak with us, and we hope that sharing her story and experiences will be a valuable resource for other young moms.

Reference:

(1)<https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2022/american-academy-of-pediatrics-calls-for-more-support-for-breastfeeding-mothers-within-updated-policy-recommendations/>

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ZOOM LINK

[HTTP://BIT.LY/BFREEZOOMBABYCAFE](http://bit.ly/bfreezoombabycafe)



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Every Tuesday 7 to 8 pm
Every Thursday 12 to 1 pm*
*except for first Thursdays of the month which will be our prenatal class

Sessions in Spanish:

Every Tuesday 6 to 7 pm

babycafé
USA



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Sessions from

12-1:30pm:

March 2, 2023
April 6, 2023
May 4, 2023
June 1, 2023

*SESSIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH WITH SPANISH TRANSLATION.



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CLASE PRENATAL VIRTUAL GRATUITA

Todos están invitados a la clase prenatal mensual GRATUITA para los futuros y nuevos padres/madres (y sus familias)! Cubriremos temas como la lactancia materna, la nutrición, la seguridad del asiento del coche, la depresión postparto, la ictericia y mucho más.

Únase a cualquier sesión:



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Sesiones de

12pm-1:30pm

El 2 de marzo de 2023
El 6 de abril de 2023
El 4 de mayo de 2023
El 1 de junio de 2023

*SESIONES ESTÁN DISPONIBLES EN INGLÉS CON TRADUCCIÓN EN ESPAÑOL.



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