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# TALWD NEWS

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TALWD NEWS

April 2019



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Alt: Dalia Aguilar

# A Shining Star



## Darlene Irwin

Darlene Irwin first came to the City of Dallas WIC Program in 1997 as a dietetic intern from Texas Woman's University. While completing her master's degree in Nutrition, she accepted a temporary, part-time Nutritionist with the WIC Program in 1998. Upon graduation, she was hired as a full-time Registered Dietitian in the high-risk individual counseling program. During her 20-year tenure with the City of Dallas WIC Program, Darlene served as a Nutritionist, high-risk counseling R.D., quality assurance coordinator, and was promoted to the WIC Program Manager position in 2006. Other activities during this time included a two-year special assignment with the USDA Southwest Regional Office as the Registered Dietitian/Team Lead for their Strategic Program Integrity Team in the production of two Southwest Regional teleconferences, "Nutrition Education--On the Road to Excellence" and "WIC Fit Kids." As the WIC Program Manager, she had oversight of the conversion to EBT in 2008, which included major remodeling of all clinic sites; the upgrades to the WIC food packages in 2009 to include fruits and vegetables and reduced-fat milk products; and most recently the conversion to the web-based Texas Integrated Network (TXIN/Mosaic) which meant internet connectivity to all WIC sites. Darlene was active with TALWD serving as NWA representative and President of the association. Her retirement plans include more time with her two grandchildren, Savannah (age 6) and Dylan (age 15 months); walks with her dachshund, Sophie Pie (age 15); travel in the U.S. and abroad; and leisure activities of Yoga, volunteer work, book club and learning to play golf.

Submitted By:  
Sally L. Campbell, RDN, LD  
LA 07 Interim WIC Program Manager

# LA 13 Launches Mobile Vehicles

Community partners, staff members from the City of Laredo Health Department, WIC nutritionists, and the media joined Local Agency 13 for the ribbon cutting ceremony for their newly aquired WIC Mobile Units.

The event included guest speakers such as the Honorable Pete Saenz, Mayor of the City of Laredo, Hector F. Gonzalez, Director of Health, and Sister Rosemary Welsh, RN, Mercy Ministries.

The WIC Mobile units will be used to provide services to those families from our community that find it difficult to visit our clinics due to transportation issues. One of the mobile units will be serving our outside county clinics such as Duval County and its surrounding areas and the other unit will be visiting different areas in the City of Laredo. The mobile units will be used at various locations including Texas Health and

Human Services Offices, Farmers Markets, health fairs and at convention centers in communities that don't have a WIC Clinic. Furthermore, now with the mobility offered by these vehicles, we have entered into agreement with both Wal-Mart and HEB to have our clinic onsite at various stores on a regular basis.

With the added versatility of the mobile units, Local Agency 13 will be working with community partners with the ultimate goal to reach out to as many families as possible in our community.



Submitted by: Guillermo Walls, MA  
Chief of Nutrition  
WIC Director, LA #13

# National Nutrition Month Celebration at LA 34-01



This month we hosted a National Nutrition Month Celebration, we shared with families the many wonderful nutrition properties of the 5 food groups. Our clients arrived and found their favorite nutritionist dressed as a cow, corn, pineapple, carrot farmer and even an egg!

For the celebration we prepared booths representing each food group on the USDA My Plate and planned an educational activity emphasizing the benefits of each food group. Activities included everything from a bean bag toss to scooping, poring and digging for nutritional treasures in bins of whole grains. Our families truly enjoyed interacting with staff and one another. They expressed their appreciation for an interactive learning experience. It was indeed a fun way to learn how to provide a variety of wholesome, nourishing and delicious foods, while spending quality time together as a family.

Utilizing the “cutting edge technology” of our new TXIN system, we were unsure of how much time we needed to issue benefits for the families in attendance. This was the second major event since the implementation of the TXIN system. Learning from the first event we knew we needed to provide plenty of engaging activities to allow time for staff to issue benefits to their cards.....this was a GAME CHANGER! Scheduling. The scheduling process for the day consisted of three- one hour sessions for the morning and the same schedule for the afternoon. We scheduled twenty families for each hour and benefit issuance was a breeze. We were able to achieve our goal of having benefits ready for most clients before they were finished enjoying all the activities and food samples. The day was very enjoyable and educational for both staff and the families in attendance. Our families left with a better understanding of the impact a healthy diet has on their life long health. The staff was able to identify how to simplify clinic flow during high volume special events.

We also had a 6th booth that highlighted the benefits of eating together as a family and asked families to write down one thing they loved about having family meal times. Here is some of the feedback we received from the parents:

What did you enjoy about this event?

“I enjoyed that you included the kids”

“I liked the food and how it was set up. I appreciate the interactive activities for the kids (my 1 year old enjoyed it!)”

“I enjoyed the costumes, all the things they had for the kids to play with, and the information they shared”

I enjoyed “The way they explained everything, and how nice they were to us!”

I enjoyed “The hands on activities for the kids (corn, oatmeal bins) So Much Fun!”

“I wouldn’t change a thing, everything was amazing!”

# WIC Proclamation at LA 33



In celebration of National Nutrition Month, the City of El Paso issued a city proclamation on March 19, 2019 to the Department of Public Health staff and community partners. In attendance was a dynamic WIC team comprised of Kelsi Bauermeister, Erica Garcia and Linda Pouliot. Kelsi Bauermeister, Registered Dietitian, directed the National Nutrition Month activities, addressing the importance of nutrition messaging to all city employees, promoting activities in the various WIC centers, and discussing developing in partnership with Vanessa St. Pierre, RD, a food demo video, and that spotlights the program through social media messaging. Erica Garcia, Public Health Specialist/Outreach Coordinator, works tirelessly with the community in providing WIC messaging to the partnering community agencies and potential applicants. Finally, Linda Pouliot, WIC Services Manager, using her immense creativity, was instrumental in ordering, receiving, and setting up all of the child-friendly areas at the 12 WIC centers across the city.

Furthermore, Ms. Pouliot ensured our new WIC vans were available at City Hall for viewing by city council. This phenomenal team works with purpose and passion to further WIC's mission.

However, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the other 63 staff members who were unable to attend, but were busily assisting Health and Human Services Commission WIC Quality Management team in the Biennium review, which also occurred during this week. The review entails observation of all services and review of over 267 factors. If that is not impressive enough, this is our first review on the new paperless Management Information System-Texas Integrated Network (TXIN). In order to deliver outstanding customer service, day in and day out, to over 10,000 participants monthly, it takes the talents of Customer Relations Clerks, Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, Clinical Assistants, Public Health Technicians, Public Health Specialists, Nutritionists, Breastfeeding Coordinators, Dietitians, and WIC Services managers. All of these individuals provide and promote nutrition education, breastfeeding education, medical/social service referrals, and food benefits to the communities of El Paso and Hudspeth counties.

National Nutrition Month is a reminder that we should all work towards a healthier life style to prevent chronic disease. It is especially important for women, infants, and children during critical times of growth and development. For this, I applaud all of the efforts made by our WIC staff in promoting nutrition education every day.

# Hopping into Spring at LA 31

We are definitely ready for sunshine and spring days here in Bell County! We have a lot to be excited for with the mobile unit and van and the opportunity it brings for expanding outreach and pop up WIC services. Local Agency 31 has also focused on getting clerical staff successfully graduated from the WIC Certifying Specialist (WCS) program. The WCS program and staff have been a tremendous asset to our agency and especially after the roll out of TXIN. We have graduated 13 clerical staff persons from this program to date and we have 4 more completing the process by summer's end. TXIN really helped us to spring this into action and now almost 70% of our previous clerical staff are WCS staff or are working on becoming a WCS. As many of you know, it takes a lot of helping hands and motivated and willing staff to make this possible. We are so appreciative and proud of our staff willing to challenge themselves and be dedicated to the 8 month long training program as well as the wonderful staff who oversee the training and graduation process. Overall, making this a priority goal over the last 18 months has helped us to serve each other as a team, our families and community better!

LA 31 also keeps an eye out for unique and engaging alternatives to providing training for staff. Recently, we participated in a community health summit which concentrated on connecting various community agencies and services available in the Bell County area. Staff were able to meet many other agency representatives, learn more about their programs and perform group case studies that assisted them in identifying the resources in our specific community that are available to clients. Staff learned new information and felt they had gained confidence in knowing more details about some of our commonly referred to resources.

This last year, I also tried something new for our clinic supervisors and administrative staff to help keep them engaged, motivated and learning new skills. It is easy to concentrate on all staff as a whole and to feel we are finished with training once we meet the state agency requirements. But, I found that often times those we place more responsibility on, have our highest expectations of and expect to motivate others can get kind of lost in the crowd so to speak. Therefore, I signed up all our leadership staff for the Fred Pryor Seminars and annual training membership. They are able to attend live trainings locally as we have several that come to our Temple and Killeen area throughout the year. They are also able to access the recorded trainings online and download leadership books and materials. Many of the managerial staff regularly watch the quick 5 and 10 minute leadership topics online and find them very helpful as well. We have definitely gotten our money's worth as all the staff have attended 4+ live seminars over the last year. All of them are very engaged in the trainings and use the learned content to manage their clinics better, work with others better, and understand what drives their staff and also for their own personal self-improvement and relationship building amongst us as an administrative team. If you have the opportunity to do this for your leadership staff, I would highly recommend it. Some of the topics we have found to be very insightful and engaging are: Making the Transition from Staff to Supervisor, Dealing with Difficult People, Bad Attitudes & Negative Behaviors, First Time Manager or Supervisor, Developing Emotional Intelligence, and Leadership, Teambuilding & Coaching Skills for Managers & Supervisors. Of course there are hundreds of topics to choose from online and it really depends on the person if this is something helpful. When I became director about 2 years ago, our agency went from having clinic supervisors who had been in the position for many years to decades to having all new leadership staff and all first time clinic supervisors. It was a good challenge but one that definitely required continued growth and development to be successful. I always find myself lucky to have the opportunity to attend TALWD, NWA and WIC related conferences as well as national leadership conferences through the Junior League in the past. These experiences have all benefited me as a leader and helped me to build and grow relationships with others and my own self-improvement. I know doing this for those we count on so much and want to "train up" can't help but be a good thing all around!

Hopping into Spring at LA 31 cont'd...



WIC Certification Specialists (WCS) and their trainers



LA 31 staff

# LA #21 Welcomes New WIC Director

We would like to introduce our new WIC Director, Janice Piper, MA, MEd. She has worked in Education as a teacher, counselor and Assistant Principal. She has also worked at Child Protective Services, Red River Mental Inpatient Hospital and as a private counselor. On a personal note she has been married to her husband, Ryan, for 20 years. They have a 19 year old son, Gage, and a 15 year old daughter, Gentry. She enjoys camping, scrap booking and considers herself a life long learner. She stated " I am excited and blessed to have the opportunity to gain experience in the WIC program. I feel all of the paths that I have been on have led me to this position. I can't wait to see what is in store. "

The former WIC Director, Janna Kaelin recently retired after years of service to the Texas WIC Program.

Submitted by:  
Lou Kriedler, Director of Health  
Wichita Falls Wichita County Public Health  
District

# TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL WIC DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

## January 1st - December 31st, 2019



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### THE IMPORTANCE OF TALWD MEMBERSHIP:

TALWD acts as a vehicle for the expression of ideas on planning, policy, coordination, implementation and administration of the WIC Program on the local, state and federal level.

TALWD fosters communication between local WIC Programs and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) with the goal of positively effecting the administration of WIC within the state.

TALWD brings together the administrators of the local agency WIC Programs in order to promote peer support, orientation and/or assistance.

TALWD promotes professional and public awareness of new and existing federal and state legislation.

Membership in TALWD represents an agency membership.