



Photos by Todd Lack

Mary Fitzmaurice speaks to Victoria Hayes.

Pregnancy

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who pay for services on a sliding scale. The 1,300 pregnant women seen at the facility each year are extended an invitation to take part in Centering Pregnancy when they are 10-16 weeks along.

Fitzmaurice, who currently leads 10 of the Health Plaza's Centering Pregnancy groups, said one of the goals of the program, which is funded with a March of Dimes grant, is to reduce premature births, which occur when mothers deliver before the 37th week. Premature births, which can be triggered by stress, smoking, drinking alcohol and/or infections, can result in a multitude of long and short term health complications for the infant. It is also a key cause of infant mortality.

"We want babies to grow up and have healthy long lives," Fitzmaurice said. "If they're born on time, when they're supposed to be, they have a better shot at having that."

November is Prematurity Awareness Month. Nearly a quarter of the infant mortality deaths in North Carolina last year were due to prematurity and low birth weight, according to a report by the Forsyth County Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition. While the infant mortality rate varies from year to year, Forsyth County has the highest overall infant

mortality rate among the five most populous counties in the state. According to the report, the state had a 11.5 percent premature birth rate last year, while Forsyth county's rate stood at 12.9 percent; the local infant mortality rate for African Americans is more than twice the rate for white infants.

Fitzmaurice said the premature rate for the more than 300 women who've taken part in Centering Pregnancy sessions is six percent. According to Fitzmaurice, the groups, which may include both first-time moms-to-be and those who've given birth before, encourages women to make healthy choices and helps them relieve some of the anxiety and stress associated with pregnancy by sharing their experiences. During last Thursday's session, the group discussed some of the things they may experience during labor.

"A lot of women have a lot of fear of what might happen to their body when they go in to have a baby," said Fitzmaurice, "and that fear, that lack of understanding, it kind of makes it scarier. By understanding what's normal to happen in your body and what the process is, you don't have to fear it and there's a certain pattern it follows and it is going to end and you can have a baby."

Victoria Hayes, who is set to deliver her third-

child, said she's experienced reassurance through Centering Pregnancy sessions. There are some aspects of motherhood, such as breastfeeding, that Hayes has yet to experience, so the sessions have allowed her to talk to others who've had such experiences.

"I felt like I was kind of doing it on my own, and now I feel like there are other girls who are doing basically the same thing as me," she said. "It's a little more comforting."

Sisters Angelica Nunez and Inez Nunez, both scheduled to deliver their second child, have due dates only two days apart. Angelica Nunez took the class during her first pregnancy and found it so beneficial that she recommended it to her sister.

"I was pretty scared because I don't know about anything," she said of her first pregnancy. "So when I would come to class, it would help me understand what I'm feeling and how I'm feeling and how to handle it."

Inez Nunez said this pregnancy has been less stressful, thanks to the sessions, which have empowered her to ask informed questions of her doctor more freely.

"With the information that I get, I take it in and I start questioning certain things that happened during my first pregnancy," she said. "Now I do ask more questions and comment on a lot of things."

tee. He can also be contacted at 336-575-0895.

Elks Lodge

Camel City Elks Lodge #1021, 1405 Patterson Ave., is open every Friday night at 9 p.m. to adults age 35 and older. Music is provided by DJ King. Call 336-575-5746 for more information.

Tutors needed

The Augustine Literacy Project is currently recruiting volunteer tutors for the upcoming school year. Tutor trainings will be held this month. Contact Henri Brown at augproj@gmail.com or 336-723-4391 to learn more.

Volunteers needed

The Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem has openings for volunteers who can assist older adults with transportation, home repairs, friendly visits or caregiver respite. Male visitation volunteers are especially needed. Call 336-748-0217 or visit www.shepherdscenter.org for more information.

Anderson meeting

The 1970 graduating class of Anderson Senior High is organizing a reunion for 2014. It will be 44 years since the last class graduated from Anderson. Contact Fleming J. El-Amin on Facebook, Twitter or ntv754@yahoo.com to join the planning commit-

Community

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more information.

WSPD accepting requests

Citizens can now request a police representative or McGruff at their event with an online form posted on the Police Department's Community Resource Unit page at WSPD.org. The form allows citizens to request a speaker, an officer, the crime prevention unit or McGruff, the crime-fighting dog, at their event. Citizens should complete the form at least 14 days in advance of their event. For more information, call the Community Resource Unit at 336-773-7835.

Bazaar to include shopping, workshops and Santa

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Heavenly Holiday Bazaar, organized by The Women's & Girls' Project of Winston-Salem and the Louise G. Wilson Twirlers, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at The Enterprise Center, 1922 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.

It is being billed as an "ultimate social shopping experience" that will provide attendees with original merchandise, networking opportunities, workshops and other festive activities.

"We decided to join forces in planning the Heavenly Holiday Bazaar as a way to celebrate the successes of the women and girls in our community. We have women business owners representing various fields; highlighting these businesses, especially during the holiday season is important to us," said Nakida R. McDaniel, founder of The Women's & Girls' Project, which, like the newly-created Louise G. Wilson Twirlers, is dedicated to uplifting women and girls physically, emotionally and economically.

Jai Cook, a career and college advisor who owns Ayres Voice, LLC, will conduct the "Time 2 Do U" motivational/career development workshop at the Bazaar. It is designed to educate and motivate attendees to take charge of their careers.

"There are many talented people that merely need support and education. Working with people to develop their resumes and professional development skills is important," Cook said. "It's also critical that we offer entrepreneurs support. There is more opportunity now than ever to harness the ability to become self-employed."

Anthony Ingram, owner of Superpower Bails Bonding, will sponsor the family-friendly "Breakfast with Santa" during the Bazaar.

"Nothing like coming together over the holiday season in the spirit of giving and celebrating. When approached about supporting, I felt it was ideal. My vision is to educate so many youth that I put



Submitted Photos

The Louise G. Wilson Twirlers



Members of the Women's & Girls' Project.

myself out of business," said Ingram, who mentors kids and shares with them life skills.

The event will also feature the "What We Do" youth career fair, which will highlight professionals from different fields. The shopping area will feature vendors offering clothing, shoes, jewelry/accessories, hand-crafted gifts, baked goods and more. Yelp will be providing complimentary gift wrapping.

Women's & Girls' Project Co-founder Shannon Brooks - who has been hosting networking events at Simply Soul

Restaurant (one of the sponsors of the event) for the past few months - said that there is still room for more vendors.

"We've received an overwhelming response from vendors and community organizations. As a result, we've extended the space for the event and the deadline for vendors to apply is open until all spaces are filled," said Brooks.

To become a vendor or for more information, go to www.womensandgirlsproject336.org or contact McDaniel at 336-757-2562 or info@womensandgirlsproject336.org.



Ingram

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