



NYC Nurse-Family Partnership E-News

July 2016

www.nyc.gov/health/nfp

New Nonprofit Group Created to Provide Support to NYC NFP Clients

When Susan Orkin sought volunteer opportunities in retirement, NYC NFP was a perfect fit. As the former Deputy Director of Hempfield Behavioral Health in Harrisburg, PA, which had run the city's NFP program, Susan had firsthand knowledge of the program's profound impact on the lives of families and communities.

Joining the NYC NFP Community Advisory Board (CAB) in March 2014, she teamed up with fellow board member Chris Wasserstein—a philanthropist, grandmother and semi-retired psychotherapist who joined the CAB in 2012 and also serves on the board of the NFP National Service Office—to explore the feasibility of an idea Susan had raised at her first CAB meeting: creating an affinity group that would support the work of NYC NFP through fundraising and volunteer programming to enrich the experience of clients in the program.



At a recent get-together hosted by Friends of NYC Nurse-Family Partnership to raise awareness and support for the group's work on behalf of the program's clients, Grace Arnould shares some of her experiences working with clients as a nurse in NYC NFP's Targeted Citywide Initiative, which serves homeless or incarcerated women and girls and girls in foster care.

Their first step was to meet with each of NYC NFP's seven program sites to ask the site directors to identify needs not being met due to lack of funding, staff time or both. They then set about to create a group whose mission would be to help fill these gaps and, over the next two years, the nonprofit Friends of New York City Nurse-Family Partnership was born.

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NFP IN THE NEWS

The New York Times: Too Small to Fail

In a June 2 [New York Times opinion piece](#), columnist and longtime NFP champion Nicholas Kristof writes, "Brain research in the last dozen years underscores that the time of life that may shape adult outcomes the most is pregnancy through age 2 or 3." The most recent research, he says, "explains why early childhood is so critical: That's when the brain is developing most quickly. Children growing up in poverty face high levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which changes the architecture of the brain, compromising areas like the amygdala and hippocampus."

Kristof advocates for "help for families beginning in pregnancy, to reduce the risk that children will be born with addictions and to increase the prospect that they will be raised with lots of play and



NYC NFP CAB members and Friends of NYC Nurse-Family Partnership board members Dr. Susan Chinitz (left), Chris Wasserstein (back row, right) and Susan Orkin (front row) with (next to Susan Chinitz, from left to right) Jamaica NFP nurse Carol Coleman, Jamaica NFP Nurse Supervisor Eulanda Greene and NYC NFP Director Roberta Holder-Mosley.

The challenges addressed by the Friends include financial obstacles faced by clients seeking to pursue education and employment goals, and insufficient group educational and socialization programming to reduce client isolation and facilitate the learning of valuable life skills. Through its fundraising efforts, Friends of NYC NFP has taken up the mantle of the program's Heart's Desire Scholarship Fund, which, through funding provided by private foundations from 2008 to 2014, assisted more than 300 NYC NFP clients with education- and employment-related expenses, including tuition, books, laptops, transportation and child care. The newly christened Heart's Desire Fund, to be administered entirely by the Friends, will retain its original goal: helping clients achieve their education and employment goals and, in so doing, paving the way for them to achieve their "heart's desire."



Shanell Medlock (right) was homeless, jobless and without family support when she enrolled in NYC NFP. Shown here at her 2015 graduation with daughter Harmony and NYC NFP nurse Femida Mohamedali, Shanell was one of more than 300 lucky Heart's Desire recipients since 2008. Her award was a laptop that enabled her to participate in a home health aide training program while still being the sole caregiver for Harmony. That laptop helped unlock her future. Once she completed training, Shanell was able to get a job and thus qualify for public housing, her ultimate heart's desire. Shanell and Harmony are now a thriving, happy, stable family.

conversation.”

As members of our community know, NFP functions in exactly this way, helping to break the cycle of poverty by providing vital, caring and knowledgeable support to new mothers during the most crucial time for their babies—the time that will have the greatest impact on the rest of their lives.

CAREERS AT NYC NFP

Do you know any nurses looking for one of the most rewarding jobs of their careers? Please share the below links for NYC NFP's job openings by program site.

For **Jamaica** and **TCI**, visit the [NYC Jobs website](#), click on “Modify Advanced Search Criteria” and search using these job IDs:

Nurse Home Visitor, Jamaica: Job ID 230536
Nurse Home Visitor, TCI: Job ID 229849

Staten Island NFP has several open positions, including for bilingual English/Spanish nurses. For more information or to apply, [email Program Director Jo-Ellen Brannigan](#). For **Northern Queens** and **Brooklyn**, search for “Nurse Home Visitor” on the [Public Health Solutions](#) and [SCO Family of Services](#) websites, respectively.

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The Friends will also be addressing the need for more client enrichment programming. It plans to develop a corps of volunteers to assist NYC NFP nurses in offering a variety of group sessions for clients, including workshops on nutrition, money management, career development and more. In their initial meetings with Chris and Susan, NYC NFP site directors emphasized the importance of bringing moms together to learn, discuss, share and sometimes just let loose and have fun, explaining that in addition to what clients learn, such experiences help decrease social isolation, foster peer support and improve retention in the program.



This year's Heart's Desire Fund will help NYC NFP clients like Cindy DeVillar, shown here with son Caleb. Cindy, who was homeless when she began the program, graduated in 2015. Her Heart's Desire award enabled her to participate in training to obtain licensing for the day care center she now operates. To see the thank-you video she created for her nurse and NYC NFP, click [here](#).

The Friends has already surpassed its original fundraising goal and plans to administer its first round of Heart's Desire Fund awards this fall. Instructions and application forms will be sent to NYC NFP nurses in August, client applications—including a letter of recommendation from the client's nurse—will be due September 30, and awards will be announced by early November. NYC NFP is inspired by and grateful for the phenomenal work accomplished by the Friends thus far, and we look forward to introducing *E-News* readers to the Heart's Desire Fund winners later this year! For more information about Friends of New York City Nurse-Family Partnership, please visit www.friendsofnycnfp.org.

NFP Spotlited in New Urban Institute Project

Nurse-Family Partnership is spotlighted in a new Urban Institute project, [The Picture of Health](#), which explores the impact of poverty and other social determinants of health—and the positive effects programs like NFP and others are having on the health of families and communities.



For news and updates on NYC NFP, please follow Dr. George Askew, the Division of Family and Child Health's Deputy Commissioner, at [@DrGeorgeLAskew](#). And keep up on all the NYC Health Department's news and program updates at [@nycHealthy](#).

FACEBOOK PAGE: OUR LITTLST NEW YORKERS



Keep up with NYC NFP and all of the Division of Family and Child Health on the ["Our Littlest New Yorkers" Facebook page](#), where NYC parents and families are talking about the joys and challenges of raising young children. Visit it daily for tips, events, photos and more: www.facebook.com/LittlestNYers!

ABOUT US

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based nationwide nurse home visiting program committed to improving the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income first-time mothers and their children

["Becoming Mom"](#) features the inspiring story of Dallas NFP client Mariah, and the project's [short introductory video](#) also features beautiful footage of Mariah and her son Ezekial.

To join our mailing list, send an email with "subscribe" in the subject line to nycnfp@health.nyc.gov.

[\(national NFP website\)](#). The program is voluntary and there is no cost to the client. NYC NFP is the largest urban program in the country, having served more than 13,000 clients since its inception in 2003 and currently serving approximately 1,700 clients across all five boroughs.



*The New York City Nurse-Family Partnership is administered by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, which contracts with the following agencies to provide services: **Harlem Hospital Center, Public Health Solutions, Richmond Home Need Services, SCO Family of Services and Visiting Nurse Service of New York.** The program is funded by New York City and State as well as with federal Medicaid, MIECHV (Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program) and TANF dollars. In addition, since 2003 it has received generous support from dedicated individual donors and private foundations, including the **Altman Foundation, The Arthur Foundation, The Dunn Foundation, the Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence, the New York State Health Foundation, Newman's Own Foundation, The Pinkerton Foundation, Robin Hood, the Samberg Family Foundation, Schwartz Cousins Fund, The Edith Glick Shoolman Children's Foundation and Starr International Foundation.** All private grants for NYC NFP are managed by the Fund for Public Health in New York, a nonprofit organization that works with the NYC Health Department to develop innovative, valuable and lasting public-private partnerships that increase the agency's capacity and reach.*

NYC Nurse-Family Partnership | Call 311 | nycnfp@health.nyc.gov