

July 29, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Events celebrate, encourage during World Breastfeeding Month

World Breastfeeding Week is August 1-7, 2013, and in fact the entire month of August will be recognized as World Breastfeeding Month in Springfield and elsewhere.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department's Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program will kick off World Breastfeeding Month by holding a public event from 10 a.m. to noon on Friday, Aug. 2 in the WIC lobby that will celebrate and encourage breastfeeding in a number of ways. WIC is located inside Jordan Valley Community Health Center, 440 E. Tampa St.

Local moms and their babies are encouraged to come help break a world breastfeeding record at 10:30 a.m. that day. "The Big Latch On" is a worldwide event in which groups of breastfeeding women come together at registered locations at a set time, and all latch on their child for one minute while being counted by witnesses. The numbers are tallied in an effort to beat previous Big Latch On records, or maybe even the world record. Any breastfeeding mom can attend. In addition to the "Latch On," the Friday event will feature vendor booths and information from the Springfield-Greene County Library, Parents as Teachers, The Doula Foundation and Family Voices.

"We're hoping to pack our lobby with mothers on Aug. 2 to help demonstrate to the world that Springfield and Greene County is a place where healthy habits start at birth," said Julie Randolph, IBCLC, Senior Nutritionist and Lactation Consultant at WIC.

An additional "Big Latch On" event will be held at 10 a.m. the next day, Saturday, Aug. 3, sponsored by Le Leche League of Springfield. That event will take place at Living Memorial Park, 4405 S. Nature Center Way, weather permitting. Follow the League on Facebook ([Facebook.com/lllofspringfieldmo](https://www.facebook.com/lllofspringfieldmo)) for more details. Moms who attend both events can be counted twice.

Next, that afternoon, representatives from Greater Ozarks Regional Breastfeeding Coalition will head out in teams to personally recognize about two dozen local businesses and employers who have been nominated by area moms as being particularly "breast-feeding friendly" in some way. **Media are invited to ride along with these teams, but we need advance notice from interested outlets.**

"We truly want to highlight positive developments around breastfeeding in the community," said Coalition chair Cheryl Blevins, RNC, CLC, and public health nurse with the health department. "We want to reinforce those efforts."

Evidence is clear that breastfeeding is the ideal way to feed an infant. Research shows that infants who are not exclusively breastfed for their first six months of life are more likely to develop a wide range of chronic and acute diseases. Despite most mothers wanting to breastfeed, many are met with multiple and complex barriers that keep them from achieving their personal breastfeeding goals. Support and encouragement from all angles can make success possible for mothers who wish to breastfeed.

Appropriate breastfeeding support can build a mother's confidence with breastfeeding. It is critical that breastfeeding families be supported by their community. A number of interconnected efforts are taking place right now in Springfield, including the formation of the Greater Ozarks Regional Breastfeeding Coalition. The group includes physicians, nurses and lactation experts from CoxHealth, Jordan Valley Community Health Center, Mercy Springfield and the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, including the department's Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program. Its purpose is to provide support, advocacy and clinical consistency for breastfeeding in the Springfield region. The Coalition's first major project was the creation of the Greater Ozarks Regional Mothers' Milk Depot, a local human milk collection site. The depot allows local breastfeeding moms who pass health screenings to donate excess breast milk for processing, pasteurization and distribution.

World Breastfeeding Week is coordinated globally by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

For more information or to set up an interview about World Breast Feeding Month, the "Big Latch-On," the business recognition program, the Coalition or the Depot, contact: Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.