



Connie Beck, Director  
Social Services | Public Health | Behavioral Health

## news release

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### Nurse-Family Partnership celebrates recent program graduates and welcomes new participants

Nearly 840 families have graduated from the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program since it launched locally in 2009, including more than a dozen new families who recently celebrated completing the program.

The graduation event, held at Sequoia Park in Eureka, was attended by dozens of program participants including newly enrolled families, families who are partway through the program and recent graduates.

NFP, a program of the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), is an evidence-based, voluntary prevention program that provides nurse home visitation services to income-qualifying, first-time mothers. Nurses begin home or field visits early in the mother's pregnancy and continue visitation until the child's second birthday. Nurses provide support, education and counseling on health, development and self-sufficiency issues.

Previously a labor and delivery nurse, Public Health Nurse Michelle Mirallegro joined NFP about 3 ½ years ago. She is working with 24 different families who live anywhere from McKinleyville to Shelter Cove. She meets with them regularly in-person and through telehealth. "I really find the pregnancy and birth time in a woman's life so very transformative," she said. "I was looking to have a more lasting connection with these families."

Supervising Public Health Nurse Kathryn O'Malley, who has been with the program since it began, said, "The most valuable part of this program is helping first time families navigate the first years of parenthood."

O'Malley said the program is one of the most rigorously tested of its kind and has repeatedly shown that mothers and children who have participated demonstrate significantly improved prenatal health, increased maternal employment, improved

child school readiness, reduced involvement in crime, and less child abuse and neglect and fewer injuries.

Mirallegro said she encourages anyone who qualifies for Nurse-Family Partnership to learn more about it. "The program is totally voluntary, so even if you think it's something you wouldn't be interested in, you should check it out. Give it a try, you won't be held to staying for the full time if you choose not to," she said, adding, "The program is really guided by the participant. We really try to allow the clients to guide the information and education we provide. We really try to help them reach a goal that is important to them."

Some newly pregnant moms will be referred to the program by a health care provider, but you can also call to find out if you qualify. "It's such a positive program," O'Malley said. "We love self-referrals." Interested in learning more and enrolling in NFP? Call 707-268-2105 or text 844-637-6667 for more information.



Humboldt County DHHS's Nurse-Family Partnership team gathers for a group photo with the Tooth Fairy at a graduation event for participants who recently completed the program.

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