



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

## news release

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Aug. 27, 2019

### Nurse-Family Partnership celebrates 10 years of working with local mothers, children

Nearly 230 families have graduated from the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program since the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) launched it 10 years ago.

Supervising Public Health Nurse Kathryn O'Malley, who oversees the program locally, said Humboldt County was the smallest county to implement NFP back in 2009. "They were calling us the little county that could."

The evidence-based, voluntary prevention program pairs nurses with 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. The program serves families in 41 states and in more than 570 counties.

Currently there are 104 Humboldt County families enrolled in the program, 33 of which are awaiting the birth of their child.

At an NFP anniversary celebration earlier this month, DHHS Public Health Director Michele Stephens said she spent many years working for Child Welfare Services (CWS) and has seen how this prevention program has benefited local families. "Nurse-Family Partnership is near and dear to my heart," she said. "It has long been a blessing for our CWS families and families at risk of becoming involved with CWS."

NFP is one of the most rigorously tested programs of its kind. Randomized controlled trials conducted for more than 40 years demonstrate multi-generational outcomes for families and their communities. Mothers and children who have participated in the program consistently demonstrate significantly improved prenatal health, fewer subsequent pregnancies, increased maternal employment, improved child school readiness, reduced involvement in crime, and less child abuse and neglect and fewer injuries.

"Many first time mothers in our community are experiencing severe adversity and social isolation," O'Malley said. "NFP is a true prevention program."

Through home visitation by an experienced nurse, vulnerable mothers are guided in developing strong families, and strengthening families benefits our entire community.”

Amelia Gonzalez is a Public Health Nurse who started working with the program in May. As a first-time mother herself, she said she enjoys working with other first-time mothers and recommends anyone who qualifies for the program participate. “We’re your helping hand, question answerer and friend,” she said, a sentiment participants seem to echo.

In a note to her nurse, one NFP graduate said she felt like her nurse was the first “good role model” she had in her life. “When I started my family I had no idea how I was going to care for them. I needed guidance! With NFP I got all the answers. Without her I would have felt lost. Words could not describe my gratitude.”

Another program graduate said her nurse provided her with a wealth of information and gave her hope at a time when things felt hopeless. “I will miss you, but I take comfort knowing that other women in my shoes will continue to benefit from you.”

For more information about the program, call 707-268-2105 or visit [humboldt.gov/578/Nurse-Family-Partnership](http://humboldt.gov/578/Nurse-Family-Partnership).

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The Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services’ Nurse-Family Partnership program celebrated its 10 year anniversary with a resolution from the Board of Supervisors at its Tuesday, Aug. 27 meeting. From left: Kathryn O’Malley, Melinda McLarin, Michelle Mirallegro, Alice Olliff and Chanda Pifferini.