

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Celebrating Healthy Babies in Putnam County

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, May 20, 2008—African American pregnant women, families and community leaders are invited to attend ***Celebrating Healthy Babies—A Healthy Baby Begins with You.*** Information, education and resources to promote healthy babies and healthy families in Putnam County will be the focus of the day. The event takes place on Saturday, May 31 from 10 am to 2pm at Moesely Elementary School, 1001 Husson Avenue, Palatka.

In addition to information about community resources for pregnant women and families, ***A Healthy Baby Begins with You*** will offer Car Seat Safety Checks, car seats for sale for \$10-20 based on eligibility and entertainment by local performers, including teen step groups. The first 30 pregnant women will receive Halo Baby Swaddlers, and the first 30 families will receive a children's book by Tonya Lewis Lee, writer, producer and wife of Spike Lee. A baby stroller and other items will be raffled off throughout the day. A free lunch catered by Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q will be served during lunch presentations.

Palatka Mayor Flagg will kick off the event at 10 am. Eric M. Kelly, Regional Vice President of Allegany Franciscan Ministries, Inc. and Chairman of the Healthy Start Coalition of Palm Beach County will be the luncheon keynote speaker. Born and raised in Palatka, Mr. Kelly will be discussing the high rate of infant mortality among blacks and why it is important for African Americans to address this issue and act locally. He will share what the state of Florida and his coalition in Palm Beach County are doing to address this issue. Lindsey Michaels of WellFlorida Council will share insights gained through research and focus groups about the high infant mortality rates among blacks in Putnam County.

Celebrating Healthy Babies: A Healthy Baby Begins with You is a part of a national campaign to raise awareness about infant mortality with an emphasis on the African American community. The Putnam County Black Infant Health Initiative, Healthy Start of North Central Florida, WellFlorida and community partners in Putnam County are bringing this special event to Palatka. Putnam County was one of eight Florida counties selected to participate in a project aimed at reducing black infant mortality. Putnam County has the highest infant mortality rate in the state. The project consists of conducting research to develop recommendations to decrease infant mortality rates and to build public awareness of the problem.

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