

# **AAUW Healthcare Committee Final Report 2015-2016, May 2016**

(word file 2016 annual report)

## **PROJECTS**

### **Poughkeepsie Mother's Group**

The Mother's Group provides new mothers in the Poughkeepsie area with parenting and health education, social support, and access to local services at this important and vulnerable time in their lives. We meet at the Family Partnership Center one Wednesday a month from 4:30pm-6pm. The meeting opens with an art project, followed by discussions of the parenting curriculum, nutrition, women's health, infant care, etc. Healthy snacks are provided and time is set aside for the mothers to socialize and learn from one another.

AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch has been the major supporter for the Poughkeepsie Mother's group for 3 years. In this time the group has solidified its program, with a very successful parenting curriculum and arts program; a regular and workable meeting space, a dedicated group of volunteers, and a growing group of parents. We have a core group of mothers who help to run the program, new mothers at each meeting, and fathers and grandmothers who participate regularly.

### **Poughkeepsie Mother's Group provides:**

- A familiar face for new mothers: to listen to, acknowledge and help with their problems,
- Parenting education, and health education, to help them to be the good mothers they want to be.
- Interaction and support from other mothers, which helps reduce isolation, and increases confidence and self esteem in their job of being a mother.
- Information and referrals to the many family and health services available in Poughkeepsie.
- We also have support and volunteers from many other community organizations including: Hudson River Healthcare, Dutchess County Healthy Families, Family Services, Cunneen Hackett Arts Center, Americorps, Girl Scouts, and faith based organizations including Vassar Temple, Temple Beth El.
- Monthly meeting Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:00 pm at the Family Partnership Building.
- Average of 10 mothers/fathers/grandmothers at each meeting, with their babies and other children.

### **At each meeting:**

- Parenting education with discussion, curriculum called Nurturing Parenting, community edition
- Art projects : painting, photos, crochet lessons, mobiles, art show, book on Mom's Best Advice
- Healthy snacks
- Mothers participating in planning and running activities
- Time for socializing/social support
- Help with the infants and children while they do activities

**Other activities have included:**

- Speakers from other organizations including: Grace Smith House, PPH, Healthy Families, DOH, Dutchess County Cooperative extension
- Stress management
- Women's health education
- Mother's journals
- Collection of Advice for new moms
- Pregnant women participating during final weeks of pregnancy for mother's advice
- Holiday party
- Playgroup
- Raffles/incentives
- Infant book giveaways

**PLANS FOR EXPANSION AND THE UPCOMING YEAR**

- We have 8-10 participants per meeting, we want to increase to between 10-20 per meeting.
- Expansion to a bigger space in order to accommodate more mothers, planning participation in the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory
- Addition of a Spanish mother's group
- Expansion to a weekly meeting
- Increased connections and/or funding from our other community partners, including Dutchess County Healthy Families, Hudson River Healthcare, Americorps, Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory. We have started discussions about grant funding from other sources.
- Children's Literacy program at each meeting.....help to have homes that are literature rich environments, infants receive a book once a month
- Better access to assistance and referrals.....largely through referrals to Dutchess County Healthy Families
- We have a new website, for publicity and announcements

**Continuing volunteer needs**

- Volunteers to come to meetings and help hold babies
- Connections to local colleges, interns, etc. for volunteers
- Connections to the Girl Scouts, organize a schedule of help for the meetings
- Grant writer
- Facebook/social media

Submitted by Kay Bishop and Lula Allen, Healthcare Committee Co-Chairs