

Annual Report 2018-2019

AAUW Mothers Project

April 2019

AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch has been the major supporter for the Poughkeepsie Mothers Project for over six years. The Mothers Project 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 4:30 pm-6:30 pm. 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. 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.

This year the Mothers Project, while continuing its monthly mother's group meetings, has expanded into several other programs.

1. Providing education at the group prenatal care program at HRHC
2. Peer educator program--Peer educators at individual visits and group prenatal visits
3. Expressive art program/film project and showing
4. Virtual mother's group
5. Website
6. Developing a weekly parenting/breastfeeding support group at African Roots Library
7. Project with Vassar College interns to assess individual and community social determinants of health

Poughkeepsie Mothers Project 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

Hacket Arts Center, Americorps, Girl Scouts, and faith based organizations including Vassar Temple, Temple Beth El. WE also have interns from SUNY New Paltz, Marist, DCC, and Vassar College.

- Monthly meeting Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 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,
- 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 the mothers do activities

Expressive Art Project

- The art program is very popular with the mothers, who consider the projects fun as well as well as educational and emotionally fulfilling
- The projects provide a time for contemplation of the issues of motherhood
- The projects are an excellent way to begin discussions in the group on important and personal issues
- We expanded the art program to include a film called "Motherhood in Poughkeepsie", in collaboration with Vassar College interns, with a film showing planned at the Trolley Barn on May 11, 2019.

Prenatal and Postpartum Peer Educator Program

- The purpose of this program is to bring prenatal and postpartum education and peer support to new mothers at their scheduled appointments for prenatal and postpartum care at the HRHC community health center. We have developed a peer educator training program for this purpose
- Two experienced mothers who have been prenatal and postpartum patients, as well as long time Mothers Project participants at HRHC are providing the education for HRHC patients
- The program is based on the HRHC Hepatitis C Peer Educator Program, and the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Educator Program
- We are using a modified version of the HRHC Prenatal Course course curriculum for the prenatal education
- One of the peer educators speaks Spanish, which is important as about half of the prenatal patients at the Family Partnership are Spanish speaking

Group Prenatal Care

- Group prenatal care has been shown to increase prenatal patient education levels, provide social support, increase assistance and involvement of other community organizations in prenatal care
- Group prenatal care has been shown to increase patient satisfaction with their prenatal care, as well as practitioner satisfaction
- Group prenatal care is based on the Centering Pregnancy model of prenatal care

Plans for the future

We plan to continue all current services in our program for next year, and have attached a spreadsheet showing a list of our volunteers and their hours. We have also attached a spreadsheet detailing, in very round figures, our budget from last year, showing actual expenses, as well as in kind and donated services. Our budget request for next year will be submitted separately. The spreadsheet here is intended to demonstrate the extent of our program, and we are using it as documentation for development of a nonprofit and in grant proposals from other sources.

We are working with a grant writer to get grant support for administrative assistance, in order to form our own nonprofit organization, and expand our services for Poughkeepsie women. With

administrative assistance we plan to expand our programs to more frequent meetings, and to have all our program services provided in Spanish as well.

Our program is based on peer and social support for women; time spent, and relationships built between women, volunteers and staff; and empowerment of women through the expressive arts, health and parenting education, and connections to community resources. This comprehensive and holistic approach allows us to form trusting and healing relationships with women, and allows us to understand and address each patient's social determinants of health, which are critical components of any healing and empowerment process.

Continuing volunteer needs

- Volunteers to come to mother's group meetings and help hold babies, play with toddlers
- Financial and legal assistance with grant writing and nonprofit organization
- Any administrative assistance with any of the above programs. We have monthly planning meetings in addition to the monthly mother's group meetings, and we always welcome anyone who is interested to come to any of the meetings
- Connections to other community organizations to organize a schedule of help for the meetings
- Assistance with a children's literacy initiative for the mother's group meetings
- Assistance with Facebook/social media

Attachments

- 1. In kind, donated and estimated expenses, Mothers Project 2018-2019**
- 2. Volunteers/Staff Mothers Project 2018-2019**

Submitted by Kay Bishop and Lula Allen, Mothers Project Co-Chairs
April 2019