

Grant Funds Wellness



Activities keep children busy as parents wait for dental/health screenings.

JCCC Family English Program

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Concepcion Rivera and her 11-year-old daughter, Xochitil Rivera, waited in a line of 40 people to receive dental screenings in

October as part of the health and dental wellness fair at the JCCC Family English Program, Olathe. Families visited, mainly in Spanish, as they waited, while younger children were entertained with crafts and activities.

“Dental care is the last thing that families who are uninsured take care of,” said Elizabeth Canabal, the Hispanic wellness case manager for the Olathe Family Resource Center, a comprehensive collaborative program sponsored by the Olathe District Schools, Catholic Community Services, JCCC and the City of Olathe.

Margaret LoGiudice, JCCC assistant dean, dental hygiene, and Stephanie Bright, a Johnson County dental hygienist, volunteered 2 1/2 hours in a makeshift dental clinic, examining patients and making recommendations, often through a translator, for further care at either JCCC’s dental clinic or the Health Partnership Clinic of Johnson County.

In addition, 25 people who attended the fair had cholesterol and blood sugars tested by the Johnson County Health Department. People who had abnormal results were referred to the Health Partnership Clinic of Johnson County for follow-up appointments. Canabal, whose position was funded through a grant from the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City in

August 2007, says pre-diabetes and high cholesterol are silent diseases that are often ignored by the uninsured until symptoms are evident.

“The Olathe Family Resource Center/Johnson County Community College received a grant for \$50,000 for a Hispanic wellness case manager to connect the Hispanic population with health resources in the community,” said Susan McCabe, grant administrator, and program director, ABE/GED/ESL.

“This grant will serve 300 underserved Hispanic families with significant medical, dental, nutrition, immunizations, pre-natal care, social and economic needs. The project focuses on access to practitioners for health and life skills for Hispanic families. Program success will be indicated by children and adults receiving needed health services and learning about health care in their neighborhood.”

The bilingual Canabal, a native of Venezuela, says the grant provides health care to low-income families without insurance. Health screenings and programs for diet and exercise are being accomplished by home visits and as part of the JCCC Family English Program at Center of Grace Church (Iglesia Centro de Gracia), Olathe. Approximately 75 percent of ESL students in Olathe have Spanish as their first language, according to McCabe.



Margaret LoGiudice, JCCC assistant dean, dental hygiene, examines Miguel Ruelas while his mother, Graciela Pedroza, watches.



Elizabeth Canabal is the Hispanic wellness case manager, Olathe Family Resource Center.

At the Center of Grace, ESL classes are held during the day or evening with childcare provided. Here, Canabal has introduced parenting classes for one hour a week, bringing in, for example, a nutritionist from the Kansas State University Extension Service to talk about healthy meals. She has started a walking class of about 15-20 people four mornings a week and an hour aerobic class one day a week; a zumba fitness class is in the offing.

The four-hour October health and dental wellness fair offered something for everyone of the 110 people in attendance – a dinner for the entire family and Wonderscope Children’s Museum activities for children.

Screening tests will be scheduled again in four months in order to measure the effect of exercise, diet and doctor/dental appointments on participants’ health and serve as an evaluation of the grant. 🌿



Stephanie Bright, hygienist, takes a history from Pia Paisano, patient, with the help of Monica Gatierrez, interpreter.