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MEDIA ADVISORY

WHAT:

The 11th Annual Breastfeeding Health Fair and Walk, open to the general public and representatives of the media. This event includes fun activities for the whole family, a live DJ, community resource booths, healthy snacks, free t-shirts, raffles and more. This event supports the City of Watsonville's resolution that proclaims August as Breastfeeding Awareness Month.

Breastfeeding Awareness is celebrated throughout California during the month of August, as part of a statewide effort to highlight the benefits of breastfeeding and show support to breastfeeding mothers in our community. There are many breastfeeding events around the State of California. A listing of events can be found at <http://californiabreastfeeding.org/events-calendar/>

WHO:

Hosted by the Community Bridges Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Nutrition Program. The Community Bridges WIC Program serves nearly 600 pregnant women each month. Most are mono-lingual Spanish speakers who work in the agriculture industry. WIC is working to build support for breastfeeding in our community, and establish breastfeeding as normal and preferred.

WHEN:

Friday, August 11th, 2017

3pm to 6pm

"Promoting Breastfeeding for a Healthier Watsonville"

A rally type walk down Main Street to celebrate breastfeeding begins at 5pm

WHERE:

Watsonville Plaza at the corner of Main Street and East Beach Street in Watsonville, California.

WHY:

Breastfeeding is one of the best preventative health measures for both babies and mothers. Babies who are breastfed have lower risk of becoming obese or developing asthma, diabetes or respiratory infections. Prolonged and exclusive breastfeeding improves children's cognitive development, boosting children's IQ by four or more points. Babies who receive only breastmilk for the first six months of their lives have better educational and emotional outcomes. Breastfeeding also benefits mothers, lowering women's chances of ovarian and breast cancer, hypertension and heart disease. The challenge is that many women who want to breastfeed face barriers in their communities, health care experiences, workplaces, and even their own families that interfere with breastfeeding. This is especially true in communities with high levels of poverty and health disparities – the same communities that often face higher levels of obesity, asthma, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease - the very conditions that breastfeeding can help prevent.

Accordingly, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services “Healthy People 2020” goals include objectives to increase:

- the number of women who initiate breastfeeding to 82%
- the number of women who are breastfeeding at 6 months and 1 year to 61% and 34% respectively.
- the number of women breastfeeding exclusively to 46% at 3 months and 25% at 6 months.

Locally, Community Bridges WIC Program mothers are meeting or exceeding most of “Healthy People 2020” goals! In January 2017:

- 82% of mothers have initiated breastfeeding
- 56% are breastfeeding at 6 months
- 55% are breastfeeding at 1 year
- 33% are breastfeeding exclusively at 3 months
- 28% are breastfeeding exclusively at 6 months.

VISUALS AND INTERVIEWS:

Interviews are available with WIC parents and advocates, Community Bridges CEO, Raymon Cancino, WIC Breastfeeding Liaison, Robbie Gonzalez-Dow, WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator, Dana Wagner, and WIC Program Director, Cathy Cavanaugh.

Spanish-speaking spokespersons are available.

Visuals include parents and youth participating in interactive workshops, and a march down Main Street in WIC t-shirts with Breastfeeding Awareness signs.

ABOUT COMMUNITY BRIDGES WIC PROGRAM:

WIC is a federally funded nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition and breastfeeding education and support, and referrals to community resources for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, and infants and children up to age 5. The Community Bridges WIC program is one of a family of programs operated by Community Bridges, a local nonprofit.

To learn more, please visit www.communitybridges.org.