



BCBS seeks increase of baby friendly hospitals in state

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

Mississippi has one of the lowest breast-feeding rates in the nation with 52 percent of babies ever being breast-fed compared to 81 percent in the nation. The state's 2015 infant

mortality rate was 8.2 out of 1,000 births, while the Healthy People 2020 goal is 6.0. While state programs are ongoing to combat those rates, a global program may soon expand in the state to further those efforts.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative launched by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund began in 1991. The initiative's purpose is to encourage and recognize hospitals and birthing centers that provide

evidence-based maternity care to achieve optimal infant feeding outcomes and mother/baby bonding. So far, one hospital in the state – Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg – has earned the official “baby friendly”

designation doing so in 2015. A handful of other hospitals have begun the process to earn the designation. On Nov. 14, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Mississippi announced it is encouraging all of its 35 delivering network hos-

pitals to also earn the designation. BCBS also held a panel discussion among national health experts and network hospital representatives to dis-

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It's all about the hats

NCBW Holiday Top Hat Brunch set for Nov. 26



The National Coalition of 100 Black Women Inc. Central Mississippi Chapter is gearing up for its annual Holiday Top Hat Brunch. Pictured are (from left) Dr. Corinne Anderson, Ethel Gibson, Lisa Green, Brenda Cox, Rita Wray, Katrina B. Myricks, Belinda Fields, Dr. Laverne Gentry, Keshia Sanders, Dr. Cynthia Armstrong, Gloria Johnson, Maggie Terry Harper and Terryce Walker. PHOTO BY JAY JOHNSON

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

Do you have your hat and ensemble ready? If not, there are only a few days left to get it together for the Annual Holiday Top Hat Brunch. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. Central Mississippi Chapter's signature fundraising event that exudes glamour, elegance and excitement. The theme is “Celebrating 25 Years & It's Still All about Hats!” The brunch is set for 11 a.m. Nov. 26, at the Hilton Jackson, 1001 E. County Line Road. Seating begins at 10:30 a.m. “We are excited to mark this milestone and the longevity of the event,” said Belinda Fields, brunch chairperson and past president. The first Holiday Top Hat Brunch was held in 1991 to help establish the local chapter of the coalition. Now the brunch is the sole fundraising event of the coalition. Proceeds fund 10 \$1,000 scholarships to young ladies in the Central Mississippi area, who pref-

erably plan to attend a historically black college or university. Proceeds also support NCBW yearly programs. “The brunch is considered the premiere kickoff for the holidays, and people come dressed to compete,” said Katrina B. Myricks, current NCBW president. When Myricks first attended a brunch several years ago she was the reigning Mrs. Mississippi and modeled during the event. She went on to be mistress of ceremonies for the brunch for several years, eventually joining the NCBW and chairing the brunch. She was elected president of the chapter earlier this year. “It's come full circle for me,” she said. On average about 400 people attend the event that typically occurs the first Saturday following Thanksgiving. “A lot of people have family in town and want something to do and for the most part, major events happen at night,” Fields said. “People in the community really look forward to the brunch.”

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Officer charged with manslaughter in Castile's death

By Kyle Potter and Amy Forliti
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. – A Minnesota police officer has been charged with second-degree manslaughter in the killing of Philando Castile, a black man whose girlfriend streamed the gruesome aftermath of the fatal shooting live on Facebook, prosecutors announced Nov. 16.



St. Anthony police officer Jeronimo Yanez shot the 32-year-old during a July 6 traffic stop in the St. Paul suburb of Falcon Heights. Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, was in the car along with her young daughter at the time. The woman said Castile was shot several times while reaching for his ID after telling Yanez he had a gun permit and was armed.

Ramsey County Attorney John Choi, whose office will prosecute the case, said Yanez shot Castile seven times, and that the evidence shows Castile was calm and complied with the officer's requests. Prosecutors believe Castile never tried to pull his handgun from his pocket, Choi said, adding that as Castile was dying, he moaned and uttered his final words: “I wasn't reaching for it.”

Choi said the officer's unreasonable fear cannot justify the use of deadly force. “No reasonable officer, knowing, seeing and hearing what officer Yanez did at the time, would've used deadly force under these circumstances,” Choi said as he announced the charges. If convicted of second-degree manslaughter, Yanez could face a maximum prison sentence of 10 years.

Yanez's attorney, Tom Kelly, has said Yanez, who is Latino, was reacting to the presence of a gun, and that one reason Yanez pulled Castile over was because he thought he looked like a possible match for an armed robbery suspect. Choi said Nov. 16 that Castile was not a suspect in that robbery.

Kelly did not immediately return phone messages seeking comment on the charges Nov. 16.

Family members claimed Castile, an elementary school cafeteria worker, was racially profiled.

Choi got the case from investigators in late September and began reviewing the evidence

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Yarber announces Phase I of LED Retrofit Project

The Mississippi Link Newswire

On Nov. 14, Jackson Mayor Tony Yarber announced Phase I of a project designed to save tax dollars through energy efficiency. The LED Jackson project will provide better lighting in city buildings and on some city streets, while saving costs of energy, operation and maintenance. This is the first time the city has launched an LED project of this scale.



A cornerstone of the LED Jackson – Phase I project is sustainability. Triple Bottom Line is an accountability framework representing the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. “Economic benefits will come through the utilization

of local vendors, contractors and subcontractors. Environmental benefits are delivered through reduction in energy consumption, which in turn shrinks the City's carbon footprint, thereby enhancing sustainability,” said Yarber. “It is the city's intent to use this framework as a way to measure the effectiveness of this project.” The project was developed

with Johnson Controls. The city has received a loan from the Mississippi Development Authority to cover the costs. Repayment of the loan will derive from the savings. In addition, the city has applied for rebate refunds through Entergy Solutions. The project has qualified for the program and can receive rebates up to \$50,000, which will be applied to the loan re-

payment. The retrofit will occur in city-owned buildings and along streets near City Hall. The buildings are Fire Department Headquarters and Fire Station No. 1, the Warren Hood Building, Sykes Community Center, Westside Center, Grove Park Community Center and Champion Center. The project is scheduled to be finished by Dec. 15.

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