



THE CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Astle-Alpaugh Family Foundation Awards \$5,000 to The Children's Home Society of New Jersey in Support of Maternal/Child Health Programs

Trenton, NJ (May 29, 2018) – The Astle-Alpaugh Family Foundation has awarded The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSoF NJ) \$5,000 in support of the agency's *Cares for Her* maternal/child health education and support program. *Cares for Her* is a holistic approach to prenatal health designed to reduce stress and encourage healthy lifestyle choices, both before and during pregnancy, to reduce the risk of premature delivery. The program, offered at no cost to participants, provides resources, education, and services related to preconception and prenatal health, and increases linkages to early prenatal care to improve positive birth outcomes. This generous funding from The Astle-Alpaugh Family Foundation will help make possible this important program for very low-income pregnant women in Trenton.

Course offerings in both English and Spanish are available simultaneously throughout the year to meet the needs of Trenton's diverse population; Latinas are served by the Spanish-language *CUNA* and *Commenzando Bien* programs, and African American women attend the *Body & Soul* and *Becoming a Mom* programs developed from an evidence-based prenatal health curricula from the March of Dimes. Classes cover topics such as: preparing for parenthood; pregnancy stages; family planning; cultural traditions related to pregnancy and parenthood; prenatal care and nutrition; identifying signs of preterm delivery and what to do; safe sleep; Sudden Infant Death Syndrome; Shaken Baby Syndrome; effects of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes on a pregnant mother and baby; protecting and caring for baby during his/her first year; communicating effectively with medical providers; stress management; postpartum depression; domestic violence; and more. *Cares for Her* Data demonstrates improved disparities in birth outcomes among Black and Hispanic participants as compared to similar women in the population and as compared to White women in the population.

In addition to the comprehensive *Cares for Her* curriculum, the program includes childbirth classes and breastfeeding preparation with certified Lactation Consultants, infant massage classes, breast pump rentals, a private breastfeeding room, and car seat safety checks with the local Sheriff's Department at CHSoF NJ. Participants enjoy a nutritious meal during each *Cares for Her* class, demonstrating the elements of a healthy diet and strengthening bonds among participants. In addition, participants take part in one of 9 Capital Health maternity ward (Hopewell, NJ) tours over the course of the year. CHSoF NJ further supports the program through donations of baby care essentials and breastfeeding supplies from community and corporate partners.

CHSoF NJ Health Advocates commitment to Trenton mothers and babies far exceeds scheduled *Cares for Her* sessions, as they work individually with each woman and her family as needed to further address questions about pregnancy, parenthood, or access to basic needs services like health care and nutrition. CHSoF NJ staff build a rapport with each participant, creating social support mirrored by the meaningful connections participants make with each other through the *Cares for Her* program.

The warm and nurturing environment of Cares for Her offers participants a culturally-supportive and encouraging place to learn important prenatal health information, and women can stay connected to CHSofNJ post-delivery through a continuum of free family events, education opportunities, and services. Participants are also connected to a number of community and health partners able to further assist them in addressing the needs of themselves and their families.

Cares for Her provides ongoing access to vital health information and services in an era when such access is severely diminished in Trenton by the departure of the Capital Health System hospital which hosted many maternal health education programs and the only maternity ward in the city. No new health provider has entered Trenton to fill this gap, continuing the problem of access. CHSofNJ is one of the only community-level, non-profit provider of bilingual prenatal health education in Trenton. The *Cares for Her* program has already operated for 17 years in Trenton and its participants often exceed the City of Trenton's general population for positive maternal child health outcomes. Thus, *Cares for Her* is a community education program with a proven and positive track record for improving the lives of the most vulnerable.

About The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey is a nonprofit child and family serving agency whose mission is to save children's lives and build healthy families. Founded in 1894, the agency protects abused or neglected infants and at-risk children by ensuring stable, permanent, and loving homes for each and every child it serves. All services are confidential and most are free. For more information, visit our website at www.chsofnj.org.

About The Astle-Alpaugh Family Foundation

The Astle-Alpaugh Family Foundation (TAAFF), is a private grant-making organization with a mission to improve the lives of individuals and families through community education. Its priorities are derived from involvement in the local community of Central New Jersey. To learn more, visit <http://taaff.org/>.

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