



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Breastfeeding Support Center: One Year Later**

In late 2005, staff at the Breastfeeding Support Center eagerly planned a grand opening at 1311 Mangrove Ave, Suite C in Chico. They had worked judiciously planning every detail of how the center would be operated and how to most effectively serve the breastfeeding women in our community. The Center's aim is to provide free and timely breastfeeding interventions so that women can ease into motherhood without the stress of worrying about whether they are "making enough milk". Little did staff imagine that the Center would evolve so quickly!

And who are these nurturing women that staff the Center? They are Lorna Humphreys, a Certified Lactation Consultant/P.H. Educator working half-time for the Center and Carla McKiernan, a full-time Nutrition Specialist & Lactation Educator. The Center's journey began by using a universal referral system created by and for the medical community as a common language tool and a method of ensuring a positive response time to women's breastfeeding needs. As local providers gained trust with the Center's ability to give or find quality health care for patients, the number of women they served weekly grew dramatically.

Within just a few short months, Lorna and Carla realized how effective their system had become. By their one year anniversary, they had case-managed 530 individual breastfeeding moms. Nearly all of their moms received one-to-one hands-on support or were referred to certified lactation consultants in other areas of the county. It is important to note that breastfeeding concerns do not go away with one contact. Women typically repeated their visits to the Center at a minimum of twice a week until their problem was resolved. This means that the Center's contacts are more than doubling!

Additionally, Lorna facilitates the Breast Friends Support Group, free for all women in Butte County. The group meets in the WIC Program classroom next door every Thursday from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. This group is an invaluable resource for all breastfeeding moms. It seems clear that mother to mother support extends the longevity of their breastfeeding experience. Incredibly, more than 300 women have gained confidence and comfort in new-found friendships with other breastfeeding mothers simply by attending the weekly mother's group.

Breastfeeding support is not just for women. Dads contribute to the success of breastfeeding moms by their un-selfish support to both mom and baby. So many times the Center receives a call from dad, who quietly whispers his concerns that mom really

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needs help. He knows breast is best, but for some reason, the baby isn't attaching. While on the phone, staff hears crying in the background and as his voice fills with anxiety, dad says, "Please, can you help? The baby needs to eat." Staff quickly invites the threesome for an immediate consultation to fix the problem.

The general public, for the most part, associate the words "easy and natural" with breastfeeding and that is why so many families are surprised to find that it may be "natural", but it isn't always easy. The Center's referral process starts with the hospital, physician's office, nurse, WIC office or La Leche League leader faxing a referral form that lists the concerns of both mom and provider. Often times they receive the referrals within a couple of hours of hospital discharge from the maternity ward. They quickly contact the mom first to create a full picture of what is happening and then assess her situation and finally triage to the breastfeeding resource that will most expediently benefit her.

The following are some examples of problems staff have encountered and how they were solved:

While on break from washing cars at a nearby car wash, a mom rode to the Center on her bicycle carrying an electric breast pump on her back. She had been pumping with success for some time and had suddenly lost her milk production .....Solution: Check the pump for compression, pump everyday at approximately the same time, eat well, stay hydrated and rest when possible. Outcome: by helping to solve her breastfeeding issues, this mom breastfed successfully for a full year.

A teen mom called the Center one day, sobbing that "it" wasn't long enough. Through her tears, staff deciphered that she was in a bathroom stall at work and the breast pump cord wasn't stretching to the outlet. She was in pain and engorged and needed to pump immediately...Solution: Staff informed her that by law, she has the right to either pump her milk or breastfeed her infant in a clean and private place. Not the bathroom! They coached her to request the use of the shift manager's office for the time being and to arrange a place for future feedings. Outcome: Mom continued to pump, stress-free, daily at her workplace and was able to give her daycare provider enough milk to sustain her baby while working.

A young first-time mom's infant, born premature at 3 ½ lb., was steadily losing weight even though mom was putting the baby to breast. Mom was referred to the Center by her physician for weight gain management...Solution: Often times babies just need to be put to breast more frequently and given tricks to keep the baby awake. But in this case, staff engineered the breast milk and baby began gaining ounces daily. Positioning and latch were monitored during weekly visits. Many times mom will visit with baby 2 to 3 times a week until weight gain is adequate and consistent. Outcome: Baby doubled her weight within a short time and is continuing to nurse at mom's breast at 7 months of age.

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A new mother called because she had been to a walk-in clinic and was told she must “pump and dump” for 48 hours because of the medication she was given. After researching Medications and Mother’s Milk by Dr. Thomas Hale, staff determined that the medication is compatible with breastfeeding. Outcome: mom was assured she can continue to feed her baby and baby is not deprived of needed breast milk.

While our Center is constantly evolving, we have found that a rapid response to the issue at hand ensures breastfeeding success for both baby and mother. Here’s to many more years of breastfeeding support in Butte County! If you would like to learn more about the Breastfeeding Support Center of Butte County, please call (530) 891-2940. And for more information about First 5 Butte County programs, please call (530) 538-7964 or visit [www.buttecounty.net/bccfc](http://www.buttecounty.net/bccfc).

### ***About First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission***

Research shows that a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child’s growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission distributes approximately \$2 million a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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