



## **A KFAP Celebration: Eight Years and Counting**

### **Introduction:**

Birth defects are the leading cause of infant mortality, accounting for more than 1 in 5 infant deaths in the United States. Neural tube defects affect approximately 2500 babies born in the US each year. Birth defects can result in morbidity and lifelong disability.

- National average 1 in 1000. Kentucky's average: 1 in 500. Kentucky ranked near the top among the fifty states and the District of Columbia in infant mortality due to birth defects. At twice the national average, these Neural tube defects cost Kentucky \$6 million/year.
- Taking 400 micrograms of folic acid daily prior to and during pregnancy can reduce the risk of NTDs, including spina bifida and anencephaly by 50-70%.
- Originally the Folic Acid Campaign consisted of the KFAP (partnership) and KFAC (council). The KFAC was the steering committee or executive council. Dr. Steve Davis was the Chairman of the KFAP, and Susan Brown served as the KFAC Chair.

### **Our Mission and Goal**

- Our mission was to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. Our goal is to reduce the number of babies affected by spina bifida and anencephaly in Kentucky, by the year 2010 by 50%. We planned to target **all** women of childbearing age living in Kentucky.

### **Highlights:**

- The KY Department for Public Health and the Greater KY Chapter of the March of Dimes partnered together to develop and organize the KFAP. Early members included the Spina Bifida Association of Kentucky and the Barren River District Health Department. The first "work group" meeting (what became the KFAC) met on December 8, 1998. A National March of Dimes Conference kicked off the Folic Acid Campaign in Washington DC- January 28 & 29, 1999. Attending from KY were: Mary Ann Hindman with the MODs, Linda Lancaster with the KDPH, Gracia Pruitt and Jane Lewis with the BRDHD.
- After returning from that trip, the Barren River District HD was asked to join the Work Group. Diane Sprowl and Nancy Quarcelino from the BRDHD were added to the group to help develop, plan and organize what would become the KFAP. Diane was soon named Chair of the group after developing a draft for the Campaign's mission and objectives. It took 13 meetings from December 8, 1998 until August 17, 1999 to develop, plan, and finalize the plan. It consisted of an overall mission statement and separate unique objectives, goals and measurable outcomes for each of the three sub-committees.
- Nineteen agencies/organizations joined as the original members of the Kentucky Folic Acid Partnership (KFAP) in August 1999. It was apparent that the KFAP would need to hire a Campaign Coordinator to facilitate and coordinate the activities across the state. The coordinator would provide a link between the KDPH and the MODs, and also Chair the KFAC. Due to the valuable work that members from the BRDHD had contributed to the campaign, it was decided that the coordinator should come from that agency. Susan Brown was hired on August 30, 1999 as Kentucky's Statewide Folic Acid Campaign Coordinator.
- KFAP FA campaign kicked-off September 7 1999, at MCH Conference-Louisville Galt House
- Received over 30 minute's coverage in primetime TV Louisville metropolitan area alone. Nearly every newspaper in the state picked up the story. Kick off press kit was awarded an honorable mention press award that year. Key media people largely responsible for the success of that day were Linda Villwock (KFAP Communications Coordinator and Media Chair that year), Gil Lawson (KFAP member representing Communications for the KY Dept. for Public Health), and Holly Turney of red7e advertising agency who created and designed our KFAP logo.

**The KFAP was PREPARED and READY to do BATTLE on the WAR on Birth Defects!**

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Per Susan Holland Brown, Kentucky's Statewide Folic Acid Campaign Coordinator